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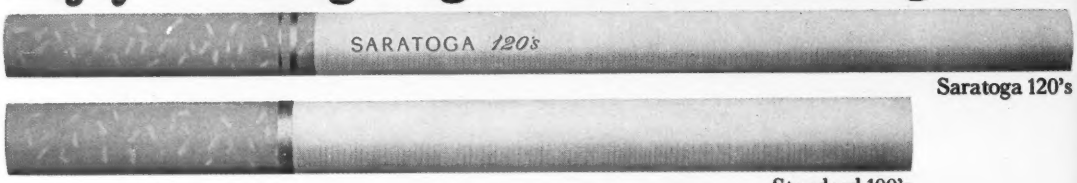

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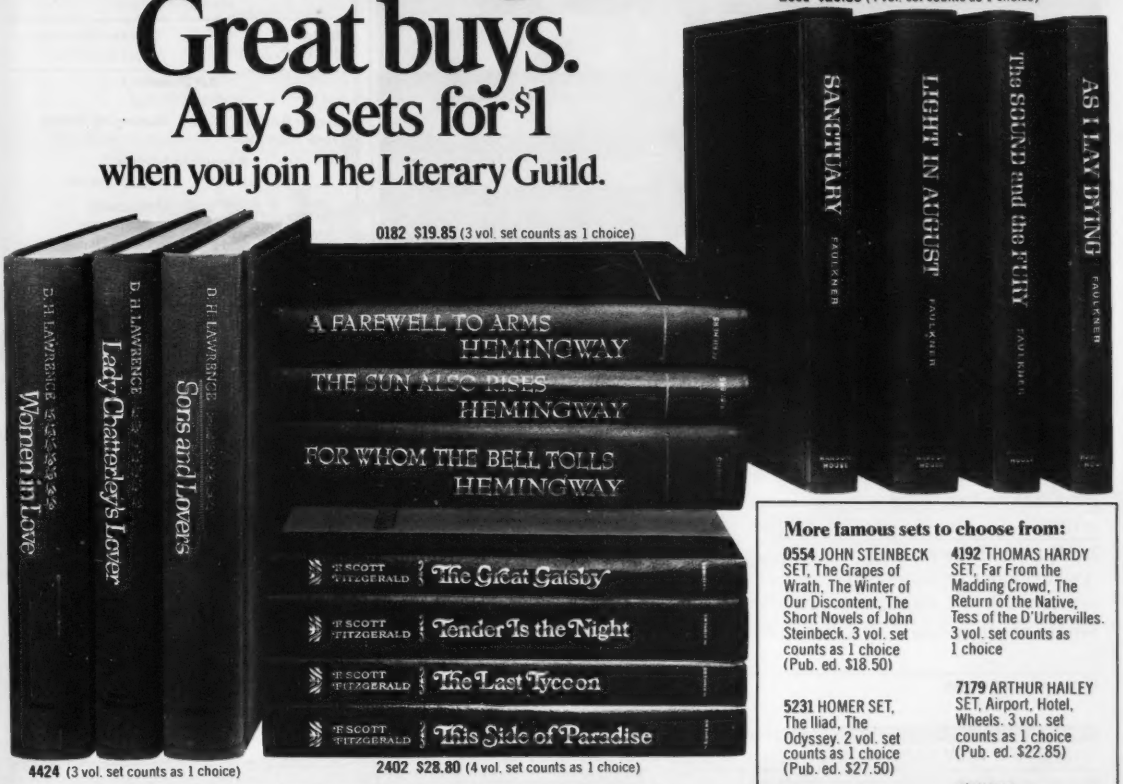
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NEW TIMES, August 22, 1975, Volume 5, Number 4

TOP OF THE NEWS

Phoenix: the CIA's biggest assassination program Forget Castro. The CIA actually *succeeded* in assassinating 9,000 civilians in South Vietnam. Herewith the full story, told by the Americans and Vietnamese who carried out the orders **By Michael Drosnin** page 16

Dr. Nork will see you now A decade of botched surgeries has spawned a growth industry in Sacramento—$10 million in judgments against John Nork are already in, 25 more suits are pending **By Roger Rapoport** page 26

Where are they now? The Watergate gang one year later **By Jane Perlez** page 34

Notes from exile **Humor by Paul Slansky** page 42

THESE ARE NEW TIMES

Water witching Even though dowsers now rely on helicopters and topographical maps, as well as the traditional divining rod, it still adds up to sorcery **By George Crile** page 44

LOCAL COLOR

Raising a stink In any other city, 5,000 tons of uncollected garbage would constitute a national emergency. In New York, it has become business as usual **Text by Paul Slansky** **Photographs by Peter Angelo Simon** page 50

Side Trips Down home on the range **By Douglas Martin** page 56

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FINAL TRIBUTE
Who has whole orchestras anymore? **By Mark Goodman** Page 68

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NEW TIMES is published bi-weekly by New Times Communications Corp. One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016. George A Hirsch, President. Second-class postage paid at New York, New York and at additional mailing offices. Subscription price $12.00 per year, $2.00 additional for Canada, $5.00 additional for all other foreign.

Direct all SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE ORDERS, CHANGE OF ADDRESS, ETC. TO NEW TIMES, P.O. Box 2948, Boulder, Colorado 80302

ALL EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE should be directed to NEW TIMES, One Park Avenue, New York, 10016.

Photo Credits

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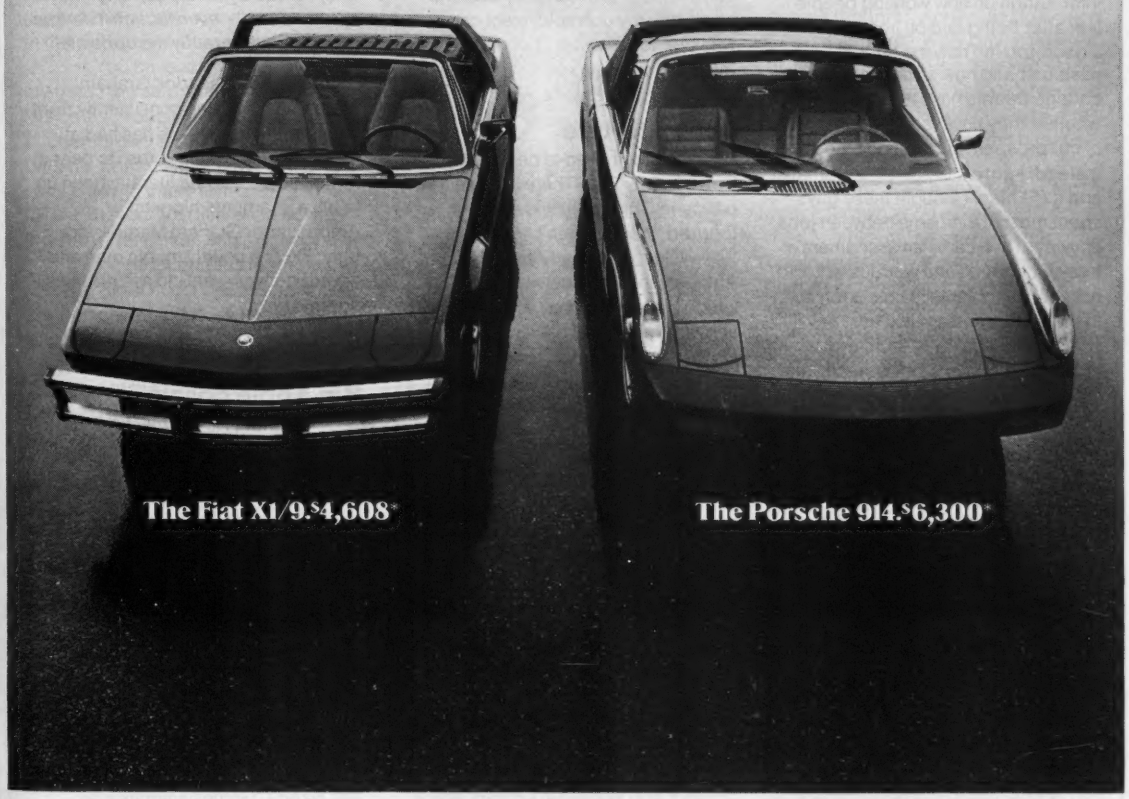
Robert Sam Anson, Doug Bauer, Michael Drosnin, Marshall Frady, Mark Goodman, Larry L. King, Jesse Kornbluth, James S. Kunen, Janet Maslin, Thomas Moore, Michael Parfit, Roger Rapoport, Ron Rosenbaum, Marcia Seligson, Harry Stein, Thomas Thompson, Nicholas Von Hoffman, Geoffrey Wolff

Contributing Photographers
Steve Cooper, Mary Ellen Mark, Ann Phillips, Peter Angelo Simon, Dick Swanson

Contributing Illustrators
Higgins Bond, Bill Nelson, Dickran Palulian, Joseph Smith

Correspondents
Arizona: Bruce Taylor (Phoenix), Ron Ridenhour (Tempe); **California:** Carol Sternhell (Palo Alto), Bill Ritter (San Diego); **Colorado:** Ivan Goldman, Elaine Nathanson (Denver); **Florida:** Pete Gallagher (St. Petersburg); **Georgia:** Gregory Jaynes (Atlanta); **Illinois:** Joel Weisman (Chicago); **Indiana:** John Brady (Terre Haute), Tom Cochrun (Indianapolis); **Kentucky:** John Filiatreau (Louisville); **Maine:** John N. Cole (Brunswick); **Maryland:** Joseph Nawrozki (Baltimore); **Massachusetts:** Bo Burlingham (Boston), Eric Breindel (Cambridge); **Michigan:** Laura Berman (Ann Arbor); **Montana:** Cortlandt Freeman (Bozeman); **New Hampshire:** Christopher Tilghman (Cornish Flat); **New Mexico:** John Neary (Tesuque); **New York:** Charles Stein (Merrick); **North Carolina:** Frye Gaillard (Charlotte); **Ohio:** Thomas Andrzejewski, Terence Sheridan (Cleveland), Jonathan Miller (Dayton); **Oregon:** Ron Abell (Portland); **Pennsylvania:** Alfonso X. Donaldson (Pittsburgh); **Rhode Island:** William Kutik (Newport), Fritz Koch (Providence); **South Carolina:** Jon Buchan (Rock Hill); **Tennessee:** Mike Edelhart (Knoxville); **Texas:** Susan L. Butler (Houston), Molly Ivins (Austin); **Vermont:** Robert Kaplan (Rutland); **Wyoming:** Michael Sellett (Jackson); **Canada:** Robert Ramsey (Toronto).

Their engines may be in the same place, but their prices aren't.



The Fiat X1/9 and the Porsche 914 are both mid-engine cars.

They both have the same number of cylinders. And they both have integral roll bars.

Both have pop-up headlights, four-wheel disc brakes and independent four-wheel suspension.

And both give you the same open car feeling with removable roofs.

Yet, for all their similarities, the Fiat X1/9 costs about $1700 less than the Porsche 914.

Now we're not saying they're exactly the same car.

But the $1700 might be the biggest difference between them.

FIAT

A lot of car. Not a lot of money.

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Letters

The New Poor

Michael Parfit's journal of America's New Poor (July 25) is one of the finest pieces of writing I've read since Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Thank you for giving him the space he needed to tell the story.

Jane Weisman Stein
San Diego, California

I was sure disappointed in your magazine's coverage of the "new poor." I expected some good information on how working people feel after being laid off from a good job, on how the bubble has burst and how skilled workers and college people have reacted and whether they have realized how much of our prosperity is dependent on war. Instead, I got a story about a journalist and a PR man. I thought these guys spent most of their time between jobs anyway. Then came an assortment of freaks, con-men and weirdos who did not seem to be able to hold a job even in the best of times. Next time get someone schooled in sociology, economics and related subjects, and not a novelist.

James Phillipps
Cincinnati, Ohio

Author Mike Parfit and his wife, Debbie, seem to have brought luck to both John Thompson and myself.

While I haven't talked to John since leaving Atlanta, I do know that soon after the Parfits' visit he was named Director of Corporate Communications for Fuqua Industries, Inc. This is a listed national corporation headquartered in Atlanta. Also, on that same early April evening, I received a call which resulted in my moving to Philadelphia during the first part of May to set up a newly organized public relations firm.

Thus, by means of this letter, I not only want to thank Mike Parfit for the accuracy of his interview but assure him that at least two of Atlanta's recession victims are recovering nicely.

Dana Hughes
Philadelphia, Pa.

In the interest of accuracy it should be noted that Mr. Parfit's identification of me in the July 25, 1975, issue is in error. I am not a psychiatrist, but rather the administrator of the Janet Wattles Mental Health Clinic.

J.P. Halpin
Rockford, Illinois

Your "America's New Poor" issue was a superlative presentation of the "new" breed of welfare recipient.

It seemed ironic to me that your current issue arrived at my door the same day my unemployment check was due to arrive . . . but didn't.

Kenneth A. Nolon
Westfield, N.J.

Cuban torture

I am amazed to be told (Book Review, July 25): "There is no secret police in Cuba. Citizens are not tortured." Since when?

Someone really should tell Amnesty International in London, which for over a dozen years has been very interested in Castro's concentration camps. It would also like to know that the G-2 (secret police) doesn't exist; in *Matchbox* (3618 Sacramento St., San Francisco, Calif. 94118) it reports two recent widely publicized instances of torture by the G-2: Pedro Luis Boites in Castillo-del-Principe prison and Herberto Padilla.

John T. Harllee
Florence, South Carolina

The bad hat

Why did you let somebody goof up your July 11 cover by terming Ambassador Graham Martin an "Ugly American"?

"The Ugly American" of Eugene Burdick and William J. Lederer was a U.S. businessman-engineer who despised the incompetent State Department pay-takers who were ruining the country.

Whoever wrote your cover copy had Graham Greene's "The Quiet American" in mind. "Quiet" was the State Department ornament who despised the locals, refused to accept accurate intelligence and was a no-good brown-nose who, of course, got promotion and political preference for his vicious incompetence.

Won't somebody please advise your young and innocent and ignorant scriveners that the "Ugly American" was the good guy and the "Quiet American" was the bad hat?

Boyd Hill
Honolulu, Hawaii

Editor's Note: Mr. Hill is correct. We chose to describe Martin as an "Ugly American" because that phrase is now understood by most people to refer to the "bad hat"—even though its original meaning was exactly the opposite.

If Ambassador Graham Martin has not been consistently right for at least 40 years, he has had at least one tremendous cross to bear in recent years: He has literally been up to his a__ among midgets. Ambassador Graham Martin is not ugly: He is a courtly, noble man and we are not very likely to see his likes again.

Robert B. Williams
Tucson, Arizona

Big Apple gossip

C'mon, *New Times!* Are you people getting hard up for material? That article on "The War of the Saloons" (Insider, July 11) was really weak. I thought you had higher standards than that. If I wanted a magazine with the latest gossip in the Big Apple, I would have bought one.

Bill Johnson
Duluth, Minnesota

Pet peeve

I am having enough trouble scraping up the outrageous funds to have my pet spayed, much less analyzed ("Games animals play," July 11). You wonder why there is hostility in this world? *How* are welfare, poverty-stricken, brutally badgered minority groups supposed to feel—with their basic survival problems—upon reading articles concerning shrinks for pets? Where has our sense of priority gone?

Jez Davidson
Brooklyn, New York

Does Karma rule the Big Leagues?

Slow Down

By James S. Kunen

Does Karma rule the Big Leagues?

If we posit that it's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game, then we should be able to make moral judgments about actions taken in baseball games, and try to see whether immoral conduct has any particular consequences.

Take, for instance, hitting a batter with a pitch. Is this an up-and-up part of the game, or is it dirty pool? I approached Hank Aaron on the matter, in the Milwaukee Brewer clubhouse.

"You have about three minutes, my man," he said, somewhat testily. His time is valuable. "Beanballs? If the pitcher throws at me, fine, that's one ball, no strikes. Right now I'd *like* somebody to throw at me—hitting .230. But there's a difference between throwing inat a hitter and trying to *hit* him."

The redoubtable slugger George Scott concurred. "Brushback pitches are a clean way to play baseball," said The Boomer, his gold teeth gleaming. "If you're rappin' the devil out of the ball, you expect to be brushed back. But I don't agree with a guy throwing at a guy's head."

So we have it from two veterans that intentionally hitting a batter, as opposed to "playing a little chin music"—sending him sprawling with a near miss—is morally unacceptable.

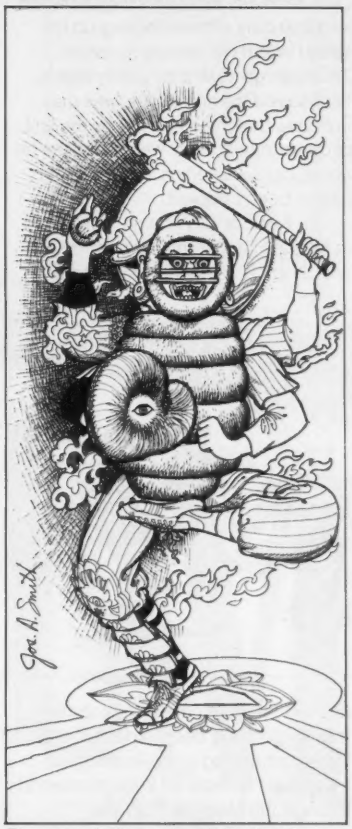
Now, consider the Billy Martin-Elliot Maddox affair. Texas Ranger manager Billy Martin—a man famous for his proclivity for getting into fistfights—kept Maddox on the bench through most of 1973, and finally sold him to the Yankees last year. Maddox told the papers Martin was a liar—having promised him a chance to play but never given it to him.

In the first Rangers-Yankees game this spring, Maddox was hit by a pitch—twice—prompting speculation that Martin had ordered his pitchers to hit Maddox.

Martin emphatically denied it. "He might have been thrown at, but not under orders from me," he told me. "They brushed him off the plate because they know Elliot Maddox gets scared to death when someone comes close enough. They know that his heart'll say yes and his ass'll say no."

One Ranger confirmed that Martin had not *ordered* the hitting of Maddox, but said he didn't have to: "He let it be known how he felt about Maddox."

Then, in the first regular season New York-Texas game, when Maddox came to bat in the seventh, a Stan



Thomas pitch crashed into his elbow; he had to leave the game.

Since pitchers don't bat in the American League, retaliation is usually directed at the catcher. As it happened, the Rangers' star catcher, Jim Sundberg, was due to lead off the eighth. Martin sent up Bill Fahey, a reserve catcher with five at-bats in the season's first 38 games, to hit for him, or, one is tempted to say, *get* hit for him. Sure enough, Catfish Hunter threw the first pitch high and tight, and the third pitch behind his head, before striking him out.

In the bottom of the eighth, Ranger pitcher Jim Merritt hit Bobby Bonds. In the top of the ninth, Yankee reliever Sparky Lyle hit Lenny Randle. The game ended before anyone was seriously hurt, the Yankees winning, 11-7.

Martin immediately protested his innocence to the press. He even called up Yankee manager Bill Virdon to protest his innocence to him. Some people thought he protested too much.

Outfielder Willy Davis, now with St. Louis, was then the reigning philosopher king of the Rangers—and probably all organized baseball—so I sought some insight into the beanball issue from him.

"How does it affect you when you're thrown at?" I asked.

"I like it," he said, his rich baritone rising with enthusiasm, "because when a pitcher throws at you, you've got him in your behind pocket. Because you know that's not a correct thought he's thinking. If he's trying to *hit* you, that means he's trying to *hurt* you." He paused, letting it sink in. "So, now, if a guy tries to hurt another guy, he gets the effect from that. If he's out there one day and he's sailing along smoothly, that thought grips him: 'Remember the time you threw at that guy? Now *this* guy is gonna kick your ass!' He throws it and the guy hits it over the scoreboard and he's beat."

Davis arched his eyebrows and smiling, cast me a guru's sidelong glance. Did I get it?

"You know about Karma," he urged. "It's cause and effect. You go out and make a cause, and you receive the effect. Even if you seem to get away with something one day, it's always with you, and you got to pay for it. Everybody lives under that law."

Strangely, the Rangers, who had been in first place the night of the beanball battle, suddenly faltered, lost eight of their next nine games and slid to fourth place, 15½ games out, by mid-July. And Billy Martin got fired.

Deep game, baseball ●

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSEPH SMITH

Presidents past

Fulminations

By Larry L. King

It has been a year now since Mr. Richard Nixon passed the spluttering torch to Mr. Jerry Ford, who blame near dropped it, and promptly flew off toward Elba to brood on hisself. This happy anniversary has caused me to think on Presidents under whose rule I've lived: Hoover, FDR, Truman, Ike, Kennedy, LBJ and—of course—the aforementioned Donner and Blitzen.

Something in the American soul prompts most of us, with the passage of time, to forget the political warts or constitutional moles of our former leaders. We tend to see them as better men than they were judged in the years of their reigns. Not me, buddy. I don't forget nothing. Billy Clyde Ralston, in 1936, pushed me down in a prickly pear patch, and don't think I fail to remember he was born during the Hoover Administration.

I grew up with the understanding that if a small boy should meet Herbert Hoover and Satan on the same dark path, why, then, there was nothing to do but go to the Devil for safety. "Hoover no more than touched his britches to the chair," my father would say, "than we had a depression. I promised God right then that if he wouldn't send no more depressions, I wouldn't vote for no more Republicans." Revisionist historians now say that many other factors, other than Hoover's britches touching the chair, sponsored the Great Depression. I don't want to hear it: I remember when he explained that unemployment figures were high because "many people have left their jobs for the more profitable one of selling apples."

Franklin Delano God came next. What he offered ragged have-nots was hope that things might get better. Don't ever downrate the value of hope when hope is all you've got. Historians with 20-20 hindsight now preach that New Deal recovery measures largely failed, and that only with the tooling-up for World War II did prosperity return. They can go soak their pointy heads. FDR saved the capitalists, who may not have deserved it, and won the last of our great romantic wars. I believe he could have walked on water if he hadn't been crippled.

I do not fully join the now in-vogue Harry Truman craze. Yes, he was tough and independent and he flashed far more personal integrity than might have been expected of a former small cog in the Pendergast machine. He restored a war-torn world through the Marshall Plan and accomplished other good works. By my own revisions, however, he and Jack Kennedy are currently rated better than their accomplishments. Don't forget that Old Harry was the original Cold Warrior. He established the worst possible historic precedents when he dropped not one but *two* atomic bombs on a defeated country and, five years later, rushed into the Korean War without consulting Congress. The mischief that Presidents do living long after them, he might in oblique ways be blamed for later decisions resulting in the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam and president Bobo's popular-though-reckless Mayagüez affair.

Ike wasn't as silly as he looked or often sounded. The marvel is that Eisenhower was considered no politician when, in truth, he may have been the smoothest pol to reach the White House. Only as he was going *out* of office, and no longer needed votes, did he warn against the dangers of a growing military-industrial complex. Though little more than a caretaker President with old-fashioned ideas (remember his reluctance against "forced" integration?), he created the impression of being a dynamic, benevolent Big Daddy to all. No matter how badly he did, he improved in the popularity polls, and he was smart enough to know it. Caught in his clumsy "cover-story" lie about Francis Gary Powers' U-2 flight over Russia in 1960, he turned it to his advantage with indignant attacks on the foul spying of our Godless communist adversaries.

John F. Kennedy didn't do much other than get himself martyred. For all his famed charm and wit, he was a bellicose man whose rhetoric now sounds almost as hawkish as Barry Goldwater's. He was timid on civil rights, placing his reelection ahead of aggressive action. There is no doubt he beguiled and dazzled the young man I then was, but in retrospect the man who pledged "to get America on the move again" allowed social problems to ferment and cities to rot.

LBJ was the most complex, contradictory and devious. Once I was alternately awed and amused by him, but his stubborn blindness to the wrongs and costs of the Vietnam misadventure made him a tragic figure. The irony is that of all my life's Presidents, Lyndon Johnson wanted more than any other to do "good." History may treat him kinder than we think. The day he died, a number of us wished we had him back. At least he was better than Donner and Blitzen. ●

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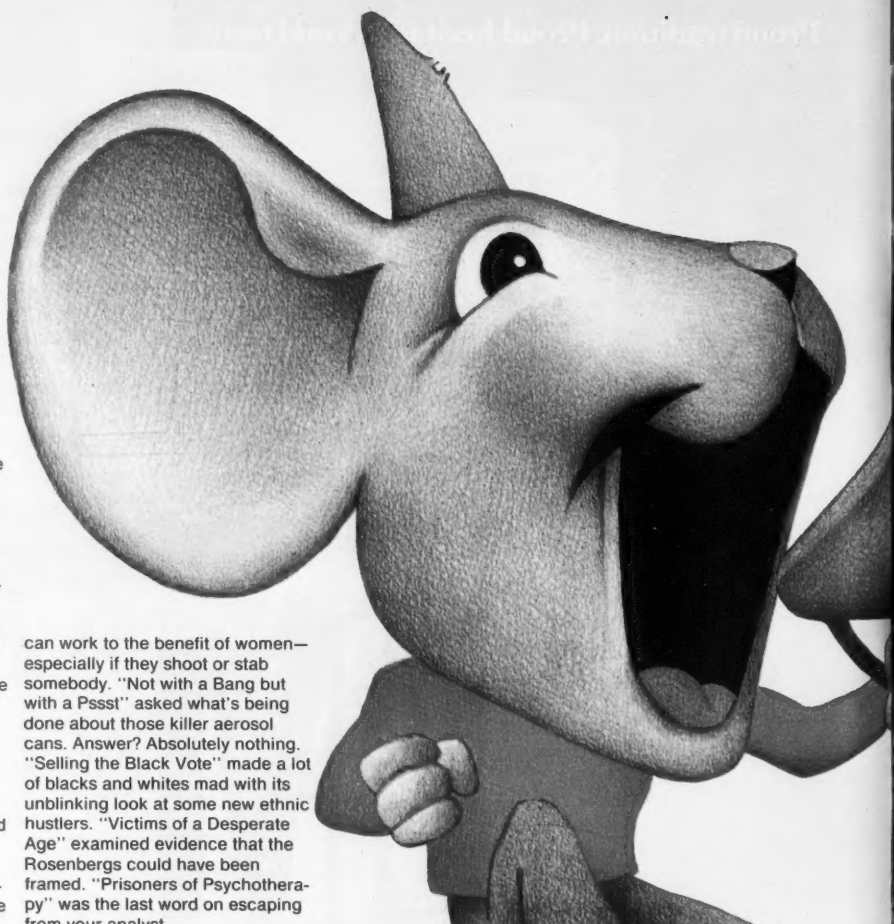
New Times. The mouse that roars.



Superman we are not.

But that doesn't mean NEW TIMES isn't busting evil in the chops, fighting for the little guy, stripping the pants off phonies and generally shaking hell out of the establishment.

Like a mighty mouse, we are small but powerful feisty. Out of all proportion to size, we make waves. Strike fear in evil hearts. Give the tremble to fat cats. Shake the rafters. The Mouse That Roars, that's us.

Some recent roars.

Every two weeks, NEW TIMES comes along with a stick or two of dynamite in its fist.

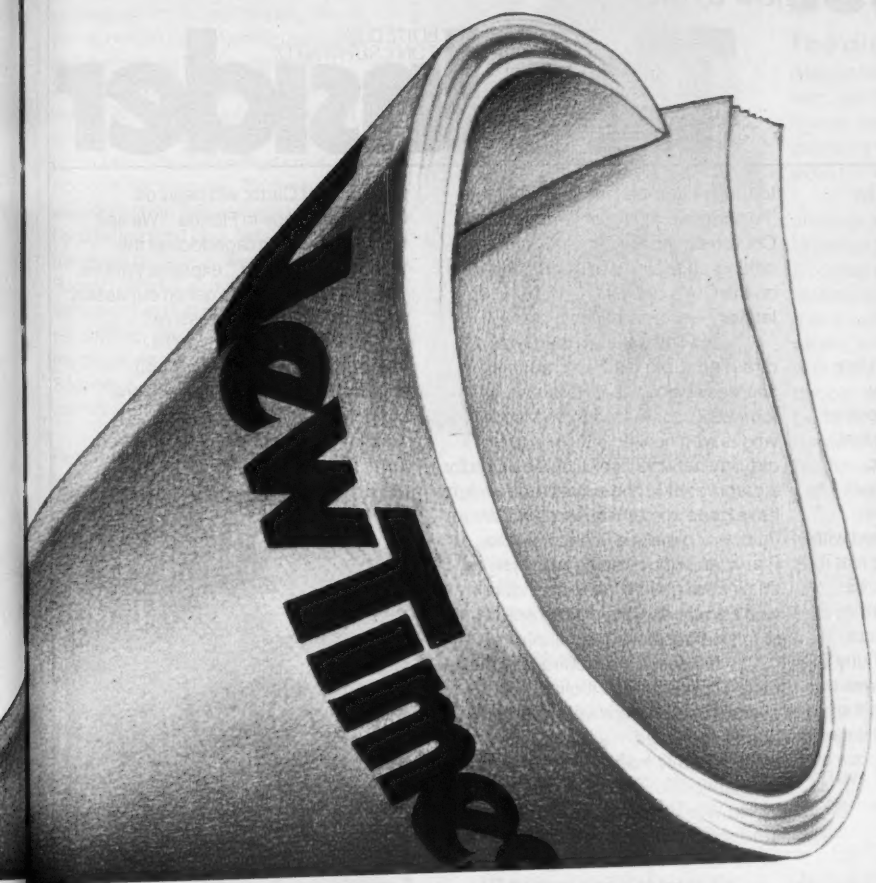
There was our story on "The Ten Dumbest Congressmen," with NEW TIMES' nomination for the King of Dumb. You should have heard the screams on that one, including a well-attended press conference called by the King himself. There was "The CIA and the Mafia" concerning the inevitability with which gentlemen who wished to be killers gravitated to killers who wished to be gentlemen. There was our "Rendezvous with Abbie Hoffman"—a trip on the underground railroad that really caused an uproar.

In "The Greatest Cover-Up of All" we looked at the new evidence in the JFK assassination and concluded it was a conspiracy. In "Under Control," we got inside Silva Mind Control. Is it just the latest pyscho-chic or can it really give you the power to look inside other people's bodies? In "The Divine Recline of Miss M" we sought an answer to that heavy question—Has Bette Midler shot her bolt? In "The Prisons of Our Freedom," we visited a nightmare called Camp Pendleton where a lot of South Vietnamese were starting to ask, "When can we go home?"

"Women Who Murder" showed how male sexist attitudes can work to the benefit of women—especially if they shoot or stab somebody. "Not with a Bang but with a Pssst" asked what's being done about those killer aerosol cans. Answer? Absolutely nothing. "Selling the Black Vote" made a lot of blacks and whites mad with its unblinking look at some new ethnic hustlers. "Victims of a Desperate Age" examined evidence that the Rosenbergs could have been framed. "Prisoners of Psychotherapy" was the last word on escaping from your analyst.

Is NEW TIMES mad all the time?

Golly, no. Don't get the idea we do nothing but dredge up embarrassing facts and tweak important noses. NEW TIMES is *the magazine of what's happening* and that's a spectrum that includes love and music and lifestyles and movies and all manner of rare new ideas. For instance, we reported on



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NewTimes

The Mouse that Roars

Will Church go easy on the CIA?
An eight-week course in how to die

EDITED BY
TONY SCHWARTZ

The Insider

Power Politics

Assassination poll

Who killed JFK? With interest in the assassination climbing steadily, Cambridge Survey Research pollster Pat Caddell decided to put just that question to the American public. Respondents had to give their own answers—no specific ones were provided. Only 18 percent agreed with the Warren Commission finding that it was a lone, deranged assassin; 13 percent said they didn't know; 18 percent weren't sure but said there should be a new investigation. Fully 51 percent said the assassination was a conspiracy; 13 percent fingered the CIA; 5 percent believed the plot was foreign; and one-third didn't choose a specific culprit.

Screening Church

Has Frank Church made a deal to go easy on the CIA to further his presidential ambitions?

Church, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, was recently guest of honor at a Georgetown get-together hosted by Averell Harriman, Democratic Party elder statesman and moneyman. At the party Harriman let it be known that the Idaho senator was his choice for the '76 nomination; a short time later Church announced that he favored calling off planned televised hearings on the CIA's dirtiest laundry—assassination plots.

WIDE WORLD

Church: the Harriman connection

No one believes there was a direct quid pro quo. But Capitol Hill sources suggest that Harriman, a former U.S. ambassador to Moscow who is well hooked into the agency's old-boy network, took Church aside for a discreet talk. The conversation might have gone something like this: "We all think you'd make a fine candidate, Frank, and you're doing a fine job on this investigation. We're confident you won't do anything to make a spectacle of this embarrassing situation."

If Church did indeed take the bait, it could prove a foolish miscalculation. A proven vote-getter, a liberal reelected in a conservative state, a family man and an early Vietnam critic with a distinguished World War II record, Church has the credentials for a run at the presidency. All he lacks is public recognition.

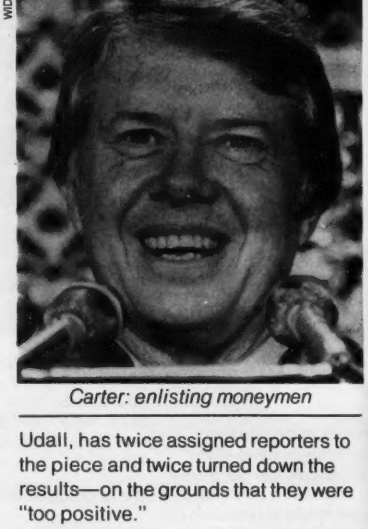
As star of a long-running TV show with high ratings, the photogenic senator may well have overcome that problem. But now that he's canceled his most dramatic material, losing a supporting cast of Mafiosi hit men and sure-fire box-office names like Fidel Castro, Church may not score big with Nielsen—or Gallup.

Campaign notes

Frank Church, of course, is only one of a dozen or so Democrats interested in a presidential nomination that seems far less promising than it did one year ago. Here are notes on other developments in a race just beginning to take shape:

—Jimmy Carter, the former governor of Georgia, has earned the financial backing of two wealthy Californians who supported George McGovern in 1972. Max Palevsky recently held a $1,000 per person cocktail party in his Bel Air home for Carter, and the affair netted $30,000. Palevsky and Harold Willen are hopeful that Carter will head off George Wallace in Florida. "We see Florida as the Armageddon of the Wallace campaign," explains Willens. "We felt it was time to get off our assets and Carter is very impressive . . . ."

—Although Mo Udall's campaign hasn't raised his poll standing significantly, the Arizona congressman has impressed Washington reporters. *The New York Times Magazine,* anxious to profile



WIDE WORLD

Carter: enlisting moneymen

Udall, has twice assigned reporters to the piece and twice turned down the results—on the grounds that they were "too positive."

—Proof that nearly anyone has a shot at next year's Democratic nomination is the fact that Milton Shapp, the little known governor of Pennsylvania, has set up a campaign headquarters and claims he is "dead serious" about running. The governor already has 10 people on his campaign staff, intends to go on a speaking tour next month and has fund-raising efforts under way in 28 states.

—On the Republican side, a tug of war over control of President Ford's campaign committee is developing between Melvin Laird and Donald Rumsfeld. Laird succeeded in getting two of his fomer Defense Department aides, David Packard and Robert

Moot, installed as top campaign officials. Rumsfeld countered by picking off for himself the key role of White House liaison to the campaign, and by getting Ford to name Bo Calloway as campaign chairman. The Laird-Rumsfeld struggle heated up considerably when Calloway began taking swipes at Vice-President Rockefeller recently. Rumsfeld, who wouldn't mind replacing Rocky on the Ford ticket next year, was widely believed to have orchestrated the "Get Rocky" effort. Laird and his allies, sensing that Rumsfeld's effort was backfiring, made it known that they felt the push was ill-advised and crude. Sources say Rumsfeld reluctantly called Calloway off.

—It looks like the 1976 Republican Party convention will be held in the unlikely city of Cleveland. Officially the choice has been narrowed to six cities, but a source close to the site selection committee says Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami and New Orleans all have disqualifying drawbacks of one sort or another. Cleveland, which has an excellent convention hall, would suit Jerry Ford just fine, since the President would like to be as close to his Michigan home town—Grand Rapids—as possible.

McDonald's bombs

Protests against McDonald's restaurants haven't been terribly successful in slowing the spread of the golden arches around the U.S. Over in Sweden, however, foes have discovered a more effective way to get their point across. Protesters totally demolished the inside of one of three American-owned McDonald's in Stockholm recently—by bombing it.

Police believe the motivation may have been political. In the preceding months, Swedish leftists had criticized McDonald's as a sign of "creeping American cultural imperialism," which they say threatens Swedish traditions. But some people believe that the bombing was carried out by the "Pizza Mafia"—owners of Swedish pizza parlors said to have connections with the Italian underworld. Apparently American-style hamburger restaurants in Stockholm have begun to cut deeply into pizza profits.

Amen, Amin

The self-glorification of Ugandan President Idi Amin knows no bounds.

WIDE WORLD

Amin: narcissism prevails

At the annual conference of the Organization of African Unity recently, Amin, who has crushed all opposition groups in his own country, talked of personally leading an African army against Rhodesia and South Africa to destroy white-minority governments. Such political posturing, however, took a second to Amin's sideshow. At one reception the African leader arrived on a makeshift throne carried by four white attendants. He has now ordered a large portrait of himself emblazoned on the interior of his private $3 million-plus Grumman Gulfstream jet. Most recently, the self-appointed field marshal let it be known that he wants his subjects to wear their leader's portrait on T-shirts. An Irish firm, Rotary Screens, has already increased its staff by 50 percent to keep up with Amin's demands.

Seventies

The die is cast

It begins with the diagnosis of a terminal illness, and a predictable course follows: writing the will, planning a funeral, the death itself and even the appearance of an obituary.

What it really is, though, is the ultimate appreciation of life. The University of Minnesota is now running a course on dying. Each student in the class is given a phantom diagnosis of a terminal illness and for the next eight weeks is expected to come to terms with the course it takes. "We felt if people could start understanding their own mortality and come to grips with it, it would enrich their lives and relationships with others," said leader Terry McKenzie Mandel.

The end of the course is described as its most powerful part. Some fainted, others broke into fits of uncontrollable weeping—all over a fake death scene. Said one 18-year-old student: "I was lying there and felt I was watching myself get smaller and smaller. I broke into a cold sweat. I couldn't stand it any longer and got up."

When the spirit moves you

Sri Chinmoy is a spiritual Master who directs the United Nations Meditation groups. On his 43rd birthday last August 27, the yogi decided to demonstrate what a human being is capable of if he allows himself to "become an instrument of God."

For the next eight months, ending in June, Chinmoy painted nearly continuously. He took extended

ILLUSTRATION BY RICHARD EGIELSKI

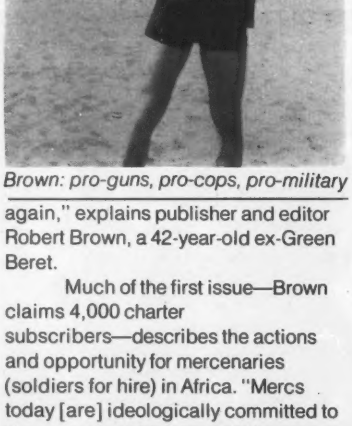
time off only to sleep (one or two hours a night) and to lead meditations. He painted with acrylics, water colors, oils and pen-and-ink, often working from visions achieved during meditation, sometimes on canvasses as large as 9 × 16 feet. Last month some of Chinmoy's paintings went on display at a block-long gallery in New York City; already they have been praised by artists such as Paul Jenkins and Peter Max, and by art collecter Robert Scull.

But even if Chinmoy gets no other recognition for his talent, he certainly will for his energy. The yogi's current exhibit includes 7,000 paintings. At an average of 112 a day, he completed 27,000 in all.

The hard core

Want to know how to become a mercenary in Africa? where to purchase a sniper rifle that "kills at 900 meters"? the story of 3,000 unpaid volunteers who tried to return to Vietnam recently to carry out guerrilla operations against the communists?

It's all available in *Soldier of Fortune*, the ultimate hard-core publication. Subtitled "The Journal of Professional Adventurers," it deals with killing people. "There are a lot of veterans in this country who have tasted the excitement of combat and can't adjust to humdrum civilian life



WIDE WORLD

Brown: pro-guns, pro-cops, pro-military

again," explains publisher and editor Robert Brown, a 42-year-old ex-Green Beret.

Much of the first issue—Brown claims 4,000 charter subscribers—describes the actions and opportunity for mercenaries (soldiers for hire) in Africa. "Mercs today [are] ideologically committed to the cause for which they kill," says Brown, whose own ideology is clear. The Army Reserve major explains the orientation of his quarterly magazine as "anti-dope, pro-military, pro-Israel, pro-guns and pro-cops."

Spirit, but not the letter

Early this year, the Postal Service began returning unstamped mail to senders. Under the old system, millions of letters—mostly bills—went through unstamped and were simply marked postage due and collected on the other end. A Postal Service spokesperson says the new system is "working very well. We're getting many fewer unstamped letters." The truth, though, is that a hitch has developed. Thousands of Americans have been sending mail free by writing the person they really want the letter sent to in the return address space. They address the regular space to themselves, leave off a stamp and the letter is delivered free. None of which, says a Postal Service official, will have any effect on the program. "People will always find some way to cheat if they want to. But sending unstamped mail is fraud and they're taking their chances."

The Word

The real McCoy

A social note: The Hatfield-McCoy feud that erupted nearly 100 years ago in West Virginia has officially ended.

McCoy descendants have decided to put up a monument in memory of their leader, Randolph, after they find his grave in Pike County, Kentucky. They will buy the monument from a Hatfield descendant, Henry Hatfield of Sara Ann, West Virginia. The Floyd County *Times* also reports that a reunion of hundreds of descendants of the two clans—which warred from the 1880s into modern times—is now being planned.

It takes two to tango

Maria Schneider, the erotic star of *Last Tango in Paris*, has a new escort—ex-Beatle George Harrison. The two have become a familiar couple in Los Angeles, where Harrison has been living since splitting up with his wife, Patti Boyd. Schneider herself has traveled a rocky road since *Tango* and achieved notoriety most recently when she committed herself to a mental hospital, allegedly to be with girlfriend Jane Townsend.

The actress now hopes to star in a film based on the novel *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, about a woman with a split personality. "I feel I've had

Schneider: I want to hold your hand

good experience for that," she told a reporter.

Post Scripts

The unsettling settling (*NT:* June 13, 1975)

Although progress has been made in the two months since *New Times* explored the plight of the South Vietnamese in U.S. refugee camps, nearly 55,000 of the 130,000 new arrivals are still biding their time in one of the five large camps here and on Guam.

Most of them are awaiting American sponsors, but approximately 2,000 of the most discontented refugees have asked to return to South Vietnam. Many are now stuck on Guam, waiting for the new Vietnamese regime to invite them back. United Nations officials in touch with the Saigon government say the problems are "purely organizational" and believe the group will soon be repatriated.

Meanwhile, some 70,000 Vietnamese have already been settled with American sponsors who generally provide job-hunting help, one month's rent and a subsistence allowance. Government officials in charge of the operation speak optimistically of completing the task by Christmas, but others say the official line is just talk.

"The problem is that the camps are crawling with young single males who no one wants," says a volunteer working for one of the many church groups participating in the refugee resettlement program.

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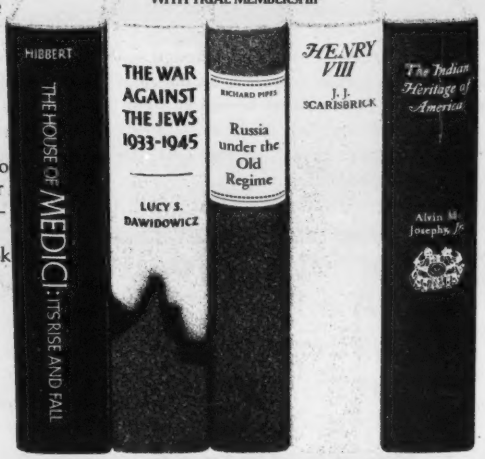

Pictured, clockwise from left: Hitler, Huey Long, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, Sitting Bull, Lord Nelson, Lucrezia Borgia, Pancho Villa, Henry VIII.

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Phoenix: the CIA's biggest assassination program

By Michael Drosnin

A Vietnamese peasant woman padded quietly across the tile floor, bringing dinner to the Americans. Captain Sidney Towle Jr. and four other U.S. Army officers were seated around a large wooden table in the old French villa that served as district headquarters in Vung Liem, a village in the Mekong Delta. Overhead, a ceiling fan rotated silently.

Midway through the meal, the village chief, Major Vinn, barged in. He was just back from a mission, sweaty, dirty, streaked with mud. Several of his men marched in behind him, still carrying their weapons.

Vinn strode foward and dumped a bag on the dinner table. Eleven bloody ears spilled out onto the red and white checkered tablecloth. "Show these to Colonel Joy," he said. "Now he has his proof. Six VC. You don't need a second ear from the last man."

"It made me sick," says Towle, recalling that evening in June 1971. "I couldn't go on with the meal, and I couldn't go on with what I was doing in Vietnam." Now a Boston stockbroker, Towle was then a "triple-six," an Army counter-intelligence officer (MOS 9666) who directed a small part of a secret war aimed not at the enemy's soldiers but at its civilian leaders.

"It was an assassination campaign," says Towle. "My job was to identify and eliminate VCI, the Viet Cong 'infrastructure'—the communists' shadow government. I worked directly with two Vietnamese units, very tough guys who didn't wear uniforms, an informal group that became very formal at night. In the beginning they brought back about 10 percent alive. By the end they had stopped taking prisoners.

"How many VC they got, I don't know," continues Towle. "I saw a hell of a lot of dead bodies. We'd put a tag on saying VCI, but no one really knew—it was just some native in black pajamas with 16 bullet holes."

Forget Castro. The CIA actually *succeeded* in assassinating 10,000 civilians in South Vietnam. Herewith the full story, told by the Americans and Vietnamese who carried out the orders

Whichever Vietnamese unit scored the most kills in a given month was rewarded with a cash prize by the American colonel who ran Vinh Long province. But he demanded proof. Which explains the ears, but only begins to suggest the full horror of the CIA-inspired program to which Towle was assigned—Operation Phoenix.

Too vast a campaign to be truly covert, the ugly truth of Phoenix has long been rumored but never substantiated and always officially denied. It was a part of the war we never saw on television. Reporters did not accompany the killer squads on their 3:00 a.m. jungle forays. Three feeble congressional inquiries—in 1970, 1971 and 1973—failed to elicit more than bland admissions of "unfortunate abuses" in an otherwise legitimate program.

But now an investigation by *New Times*—based on the first-hand accounts of dozens of Americans and Vietnamese directly involved—reveals Operation Phoenix as the only systematized kidnapping, torture and assassination program ever sponsored by the United States government.

Its victims were noncombatants. At least 40,000 were murdered, about 8,000 of them supposed Viet Cong political cadre targeted for execution, the rest civilians (including women and children) killed in more traditional military operations and later conveniently labeled VCI. Hundreds of thousands were jailed without trial, often after sadistic abuse.

Phoenix was conceived, financed and directed by the Central Intelligence

Agency. CIA chief William E. Colby was its architect. He oversaw the creation of mercenary terror teams, the founding of a vast and brutal secret police force, the construction of a nationwide network of interrogation centers, and finally devised Phoenix to coordinate and provide a legal cover for the growing campaign of mass murder and political imprisonment.

Yet at a time when national attention is focused on CIA attempts to assassinate a few foreign political leaders, Operation Phoenix—which tried to assassinate an entire foreign government, and succeeded in killing tens of thousands—has been all but ignored.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence will not include Phoenix in its report on CIA murder plots, and a promised investigation of the program was initiated but has been at least temporarily shelved. Committee Chairman Senator Frank Church has said, "We need to know the degree to which assassination was an instrument of American foreign policy." If so, failed attempts on the life of one leader such as Castro cannot be allowed to obscure a virtual war waged by hit men.

The Phoenix program is designed to protect the Vietnamese people from terrorism . . . . —William E. Colby, sworn testimony, House Foreign Operations Subcommittee, July 19, 1971.

Staffed by hundreds of Americans and thousands of Vietnamese, and backed by the entire police-intelligence-military complex of both countries, Phoenix eventually reached into nearly every village and hamlet in South Vietnam. The Vietnamese called the program Phung Hoang, after an all-seeing, all-powerful mythical bird of prey.

Blacklists of local VCI suspects were compiled by Phoenix offices set up in each of Vietnam's 44 provinces and 242 districts. The information came from their own spy networks, supplemented by a wide variety of Vietnamese and American sources, including thousands of agents run directly by the CIA.

All the intelligence gathered was fed into a computer at the central Phoenix office in Saigon, which then set monthly "neutralization" quotas for each province. Quotas could be filled by capturing, rallying or killing the targeted VCI.

The primary operational arm of Phoenix was the Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs), a 5,000-man mercenary force recruited, trained and paid by the CIA. Originally called Counter-Terror teams (the name was changed for obvious public relations reasons), the PRUs launched covert missions in rural areas. In the cities, the neutralization task generally fell to the Special Branch, a 17,000-man secret police force created by the CIA after the Diem coup. A third CIA invention, the 15,000-man National Police Field Force (NPFF), ran paramilitary operations in the countryside. All three groups worked both alone and in conjunction with regular Vietnamese and American military units. In addition, numerous irregular forces—some loosely attached to ARVN; others, like the 45,000-man Civilian Irregular Defense Guards (CIDGs), sired by the CIA—also participated in the onslaught.

Blacklisted VCI (and a far greater number of other civilians added to the Phoenix lists posthumously) were "neutralized" in massive "sweep and capture" operations or covert kidnap, ambush and assassination strikes.

"Before we leave, Mr. Jim, our adviser, he says, 'bring 'em back alive,' and winks. We all laugh"

Those not killed on the spot were taken in for questioning (generally accompanied by torture) to Provincial Interrogation Centers, yet another CIA-devised and directed operation. Captives who could not pay their way out the back door were next brought before Pacification Security Committees—nonjudicial panels composed primarily of police and military officers—for verdict and sentencing.

Finally, after being arrested without evidence, detained without charges and sentenced without trial, VCI suspects were sent to one of South Vietnam's notoriously repressive political prisons for indefinite terms, sometimes transported there via Air America, a CIA proprietary company.

Phoenix was not a CIA program.—Colby, telephone interview, June 26, 1975.

Throughout the world, the CIA operates under cover. In Vietnam the agency was officially knows as OSA—Office of Special Assistance—and also used a vast array of other pseudonyms, including CSG (Combined Studies Group), PSCD (Pacification Security Coordination Division), SACG (Special Assistant to the Consulate-General) and PES (Political and Economic Section).

Operation Phoenix was simply another CIA cover. Officially launched in late 1967 as part of the "hearts and minds" pacification program called CORDS, it actually began in the early '60s when the CIA deployed its first terror teams. And when the South Vietnamese government was finally pressured into making Phoenix a joint venture, it was William Colby who wrote Thieu's July 1968 directive.

Colby supervised the campaign from the start. Working first out of Washington as chief of Clandestine Services, Far Eastern Division, he arrived in Saigon in 1968 to take over CORDS, replacing Robert Komer, himself an ex-CIA official. To help him run Phoenix, Colby brought in a protege, Theodore Shackley, to be the CIA's Saigon station chief. An experienced clandestine warrior, Shackley had directed the agency's operations against Cuba after the Bay of Pigs as well as the secret war in Laos. (He has since been involved in the overthrow of Allende in Chile.)

Every head of the Phoenix Directorate at CORDS was CIA. From 1967 to 1969 it was Evan J. Parker Jr., from 1969 to 1970 it was John H. Mason, and from 1971 to 1972 it was John S. Tilton (who was working under State Department cover in La Paz, Bolivia, when Che Guevara was assassinated). And until July 1969, most Phoenix "advisers" at the province level were also agency employees.

But Phoenix was too big an operation for the CIA to run by itself. U.S. military intelligence officers (like Sid Towle) directed the program at the district level, and gradually replaced agency hands as Phoenix advisers in the provinces. But they made their rounds in Air America helicopters, sent their information through CIA channels and followed all "suggestions" made by the ROICs and POICs—the CIA "officers-in-charge" of all regions and provinces.

Also short on "special ops"—Special Operations Division paramilitary experts—the agency borrowed commandos from the Navy (Seals) and the Army (Green Berets), and brought into Vietnam a melange of ex-military men and soldiers of fortune. These contract employees they called "jewelers."

In fact, the CIA had a code word, or "crypt," for nearly everything. For the Provincial Reconnaissance Units it was "witness," for the National Police it was "ransom" and for the Special Branch, "bright."

Even after the ceasefire, when

William Colby in Vietnam in '69, and testifying before the Senate in June '75.

Phoenix was officially turned over to the secret police, the CIA continued to run the entire torture and assassination campaign as "advisers" to their "bright" friends.

The United States is not a party to a program to assassinate people in Vietnam.—Colby, sworn testimony, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Feb. 19, 1970.

The Phoenix program is not a program of assassination. In the course of normal military operations or police actions to apprehend them, however, VCI are killed as members of military units or while fighting off arrest.—Colby, sworn testimony, House Foreign Operations Subcommittee, July 19, 1971.

I certainly reject the idea that it was a systematic program of assassination.—Colby, sworn statement submitted to Senate Armed Services Committee, July 10, 1973

"We get good information on a VC tax collector, and so late at night we go to his home—just myself and two others, very dangerous," recounts Nguyen, a former PRU in Phuyen province, now a refugee at Camp Pendleton; he says he knows the CIA too well to talk without a promise of anonymity. "Before we leave, Mr. Jim, our adviser, he says, 'Bring 'em back alive,' and winks. We all laugh. Mr. Jim, he's Special Forces, a Green Beret.

"We find the house OK, no sweat," Nguyen continues, recalling his mission six years ago. "One waits outside, two go in. No problem, the VC is sleeping. I have a special weapon, American, with a silencer, so I am going to shoot him. But my friend says no, this isn't the man, he's too old. But then the VC wakes up and he shouts, so I shoot him quick. Two times. Phht, phht. We leave fast."

Like all members of the Provincial Reconnaissance Units, Nguyen was paid by the CIA. When he made a kill, or capture, he got a bonus, a few hundred piasters worth about two or three dollars. His Green Beret adviser also worked for the CIA. And Nguyen was trained in clandestine warfare techniques at Vung Tau, where Navy Seals under the direction of CIA officer Tom Hughes taught the Vietnamese how to kill quietly at night.

"Sure, we were involved in assassinations," confirms Charles Yothers, CIA chief of operations in I Corps from 1969 to 1971. "That's what the PRUs were set up for—assassination. I'm sure the word never appeared on any outlines or policy directives, but what else do you call a targeted kill?"

Yothers, who now manages an apartment complex in Fairfax, Va., was one of the agency's key men in Vietnam with 20 years experience in covert operations. "You know, the PRU was called CT, Counter-Terror, before it was called PRU. By any definition they were involved in assassinations. I don't know what Colby or anybody else calls it, but when you create and call units Counter-Terror teams and go out and eliminate people, whether you call that assassination or not, they're just as dead.

"Saigon always wanted to know how many VCI had been 'neutralized,' " complains Yothers. "The whole damn war became a statistical paper-battle. I mean 3,000 or 4,000 were 'neutralized' in I Corps during my two-year tenure—the PRU, ARVN, U.S. Marines, Special Branch police, *everyone* was killing. There was no true count, no possible count.

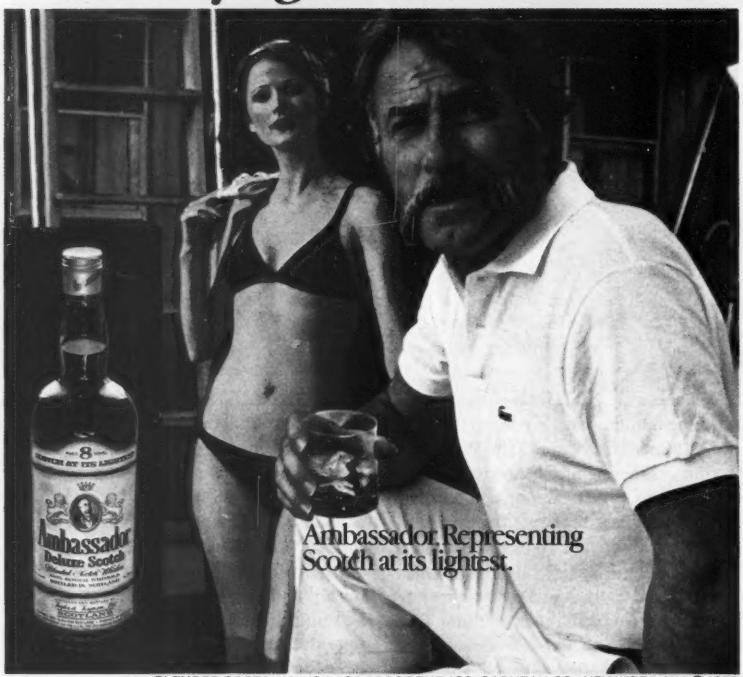
"But I never saw that we hurt them a whole hell of a lot," he continues. "All anyone cared about, at least in the early days, was a dead body. I can tell you the PRU captured damn few weapons or documents. They'd set up an ambush on a trail, and the first person who came down the trail would be zapped. He could have been an innocent villager hauled out of his hut and made to carry rice for the VC, he could have been *anybody*. But by the time the report came through to Phoenix, he was a VCI."

PRUs—who sported a machete-with-wings insignia—were paid two or three times the 4,000 piasters a month an ARVN soldier received. "They were working in VC controlled areas while the ARVN were sitting on their asses in the compound," says Yothers. "We paid them every month in a straight black-bag operation. One of our guys would pick up the money for an entire province at CIA regional headquarters, take an Air America helicopter and set down in the PRU compound."

There were about 1,500 PRUs in the five provinces Yothers supervised, with two Americans assigned as advisers to each province. "Green Berets or Navy Seals, military people detached from the military to us," he explains. "They were paid by the military, but reported to me. They weren't supposed to go out on operations—we didn't want Americans killed or captured—but sometimes they did anyway."

John Wilbur graduated from Yale in 1964. Three years later he was the senior PRU adviser in the Mekong Delta, directing the killer squad operations in 16 provinces. A captain with the Navy Seals—a highly trained commando group similar to, but more elite than, the Green Berets—he was paid by the Navy but reported exclusively to the CIA. "Like everyone else involved in Phoenix, in effect I

The Ambassador. Recently sighted off St.Thomas.



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was working for them," he says. "We were the field operational personnel, but the funding, control, etc., was all CIA.

"They had developed a theory that the 'infrastructure' was the brain of the whole communist political, propaganda and logistical effort," says Wilbur, who until recently was a federal prosecutor in the Virgin Islands. "The idea was to go after the leaders, the boys behind the boys with the guns. We were dealing with civilians—VC desk people, bureaucrats, paper-pushers, we went after the underground bureaucracy."

Wilbur has no regrets about his former work and prefers not to call the hundreds of killings he concedes directing assassinations. "I don't like to think of myself as a former regional assassination chief," he says. "It was war.

"The genuine intent of most all operations was to capture a man at 2:00 a.m. in the boondocks," he insists, but admits "it turned out to be more often than not an elimination program. We were certainly higher on the killed than the captured.

"We always told the Vietnamese, *capture*. We were very insistent. But everybody out in the field knew that basically if you could find them, get them. And the higher-level missions always meant deep infiltration, and that almost always meant killing rather than capture because it was so difficult to bring live bodies out of VC controlled areas.

"Also, the intended sophistication of the Phoenix program passed over the heads of a lot of the American PRU field advisers," says Wilbur. "There were guys under me, and I'm sure elsewhere, whose attitude was, 'We're here to kill commies.'

"I don't know," he concluded, "maybe it was a U.S.-ordered assassination campaign, in effect. Assassination suggests something so cold, so premeditated. But I suppose that's quibbling since dead is dead."

If some Americans tried to maintain their illusions, the Vietnamese were more realistic. Lt. Col. Ho Chau Tuan was PRU national commander in Saigon from 1972 until the evacuation. Now a refugee at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, Col. Tuan worked closely with American CIA operatives from the early '60s, first with U.S. Special Forces teams penetrating into North Vietnam, then as commander of the CIA-planned, Green Beret-run Long Range Patrol, leading covert missions to interdict enemy movements on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

As national PRU commander, Tuan had an American CIA adviser named Barth in his Saigon office until the

Paris peace agreement in 1973, after which he continued to work with CIA secret police advisers Al Kline and Tom Lamb, who stayed on after the American military withdrawal.

"The main mission of the PRU was assassination," says Tuan. "I received orders from the Phoenix office, the Vietnamese and Americans there, to assassinate high-level VCI. We worked closely in Saigon with the CIA from the embassy and in the provinces with the CIA at the consulates to decide who to kill.

"Our general orders were to eliminate VCI—to kidnap or kill," continues Tuan. "Sometimes the orders were to eliminate VCI quick, no questions asked. Then we kill, no sweat." Tuan said his 3,500 mercenaries were supplied by the CIA with M-15 "commando automatic rifles" equipped with star-lite scopes to see at night, pistols with silencers "for special missions" and a chemical spray called "VX" that came in an unmarked green can which he described as "a knock-out spray—but if you used enough it could kill."

Sometimes the PRU's intended victims fought back, but most of the kills were hardly in combat. "Often three or six of my men will sneak into a house at night and kill a VC in bed," Tuan recounts. "Sleeping time is the best time. Or sometimes we kill them at the dinner table. We use silencers, and nobody knows and we leave."

Tuan had offered to name names of high-level Americans who directly ordered assassination strikes, but then backed off. "I have enough experience in this profession to be afraid," he explained. "I know the CIA I might be killed."

In our instructions, in our training of the Vietnamese, we emphasize good systems of interrogation. Now, occasionally, people do get a little loose, I am sure, but our thrust is in this direction, and I think the Vietnamese are increasingly accepting this is what we expect about how to behave.—Colby, sworn testimony, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Feb. 17, 1970.

In Bien Hoa, the headquarters of III Corps, there was a building called the National Police Convalescence Center. But the only people recovering inside were the Viet Cong suspects who had been tortured. For the NPCC, despite its name, was neither a hospital nor a sanitarium for cops on the mend, but a CIA regional interrogation center.

"Oh, we tried to stop that backroom torture business," says Orrin L. Deforest, a former CIA contract employee who ran the NPCC. "But that was just the Oriental way of dealing with Orientals. It was an ethnic thing. The torture was always a laugh as far as we were concerned. It was never that bad."

But one of the 60 Vietnamese who worked there under the direction of Deforest and ten other Americans claims that the CIA operatives never interfered with the brutality (although they rarely took part themselves). "I saw prisoners hit with sticks while hung by their feet; others had their nails pulled out and soapy water forced down their mouths until they choked," recalls the Vietnamese interrogator. "Sometimes they used the electric crank telephone with wires attached to the ears, nose or genitals. Even with women. They attached the wires to their breasts.

"I didn't see it personally, but I heard of a few cases where the prisoners

Bringing it all back home

Scattered throughout the refugee camps are at least 600 ex-CIA employees and hundreds of other Vietnamese who were on the agency payroll as informants, mercenaries and secret police. Normally they would be considered an embarrassment of riches, but in these troubled times they are just an embarrassment, more a public relations liability than a useful source of domestic spies.

The chaotic evacuation solved a large part of the problem. Most of the thousands of Vietnamese CIA operatives were simply left behind. Agency sources insist it was the result of incompetence and cynical indifference. "The feeling was, 'They're no longer useful to us, so now they're on their own,' " says one agent. "We left behind people who did our dirty work and would probably get killed for it, while Polgar [Thomas Polgar, CIA station chief in Saigon] hired a cargo ship to take out his stereo and other Americans' household effects."

But the refugee spooks who managed to scramble out on their own after the agency defaulted on promised "number one priority evacuation" are certain that the CIA tried to abandon them and left their colleagues stranded because they didn't want them here to tell tales.

To keep those who did get out in line, the agency is holding their termination pay in worthless piasters while promising to eventually make restitution in dollars. The Vietnamese ex-operatives are bitter but afraid to protest. They know they are being watched.

American CIA agents are stationed at each of the refugee camps, on Guam and even at the Washington headquarters of the inter-agency task force. Clayton E. McManaway, a ranking CIA official who was chief of planning for the entire pacification program in Saigon, denied his work at the task force is intelligence-related, while Edward E. Rusk, CIA chief of East Asian logistics, refused to discuss his role as a senior member of the refugee coordinating group.

But American and Vietnamese sources confirmed that agent Bob Wall, an Indochina veteran who was one of four regional Phoenix advisers and played a key role in the program's formative stages, has been debriefing VIP refugees on Guam and hand-picking certain ex-operatives for special handling that may include preparations for a return to Vietnam with the bona fide repatriates as deep-cover agents.

At Pendleton, the CIA office is hidden in a corner of the trailer housing the Scheduled Airline Ticketing Office, which arranges transportation for U.S. officials working with the refugees. But neither Jeffrey Ashley, a former CIA adviser in II Corps, nor his co-agent, Harry Ahn, would discuss the more than 200 Vietnamese now at Pendleton who spied, tortured and killed for the agency before the fall.

Not that security has been all that tight. Sometime in mid-May the complete list of CIA-connected refugees was inadvertently routed to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, one of several private charities that for a fee arranges refugee sponsorship. The list was labeled not CIA but O.S.A., the agency's cover name in Vietnam. Having no idea what O.S.A. stood for, but eager to sign up the 200 refugees, an H.I.A.S. volunteer took to the Pendleton public address system. She announced that the Jewish organization was the official sponsoring agency for all O.S.A. Vietnamese—and then proceeded to read the complete list of secret names over the camp loudspeaker.

who were tortured died," he continues. "I reported it to the Americans, but they said nothing."

The NPCC was unusual only in that it was officially, albeit secretly, controlled by the CIA and was used by this country to question POWs after the Paris Peace Accords, in direct violation of the ceasefire agreement. But there were two other interrogation centers in Bien Hoa alone, and they were all part of a nationwide system of more than 50 major torture compounds, all "advised" by the CIA.

Starting in 1965, the agency financed the construction of a network of Provincial Interrogation Centers (PICs) in each of South Vietnam's 44 provinces. They were staffed by members of the Special Branch, a 17,000-man secret police force also created and financed by the CIA. And each of the PICs was directed by one or two CIA officials who used the cover name Pacification Security Coordination Division.

All VCI suspects captured under the Phoenix program were held without charges in cramped, overcrowded, windowless, often vermin-infested PIC cells for a "legal" maximum of 45 days and, in many cases, for months. "We kept them until they paid a bribe or 'confessed,' " says a former Special Branch officer who is now a refugee. "We had a saying in our department: 'Khong danh cho co'—'If they are innocent, beat them until they are guilty.' "

In addition to the PICs, there were RICs—Regional Interrogation Centers—in each of the four corps into which South Vietnam was divided. They were also built and directed by the CIA. And in Saigon there were three national interrogation centers: the Central Interrogation Center (CIC) run by the Saigon police with the help of Jim Morris of the CIA; the National Police Interrogation Center (NPIC) in Special Branch headquarters, advised by senior CIA officials Tom Lamb and Al Kline; and the National Interrogation Center (NIC) located in the Central Intelligence Office, which was next door to Thieu's presidential residence. The NIC, according to agency sources, belonged more to the American CIA than the Vietnamese CIO; contract employees Vance Vincent and Frank Rygalski maintained permanent offices there.

"Torture was so common," says a former Viet Cong regimental captain who defected and went to work as a CIA-paid interrogator, "that we would not accept back our comrades who escaped from jail unless they could show signs of having been beaten and tortured.

"I saw a woman at the PIC in Quang Ngai stripped naked and burned all over, on her breasts, everywhere, with cigarettes by five or six Special Branch police," says the ex-VC captain, now a refugee at Camp Pendleton. "She screamed and screamed and finally she fainted. But when she got up again, they beat her with sticks until she was bleeding. They never asked her any questions. They just kept hitting her."

Female captives apparently were often singled out for especially sadistic treatment. One former secret policeman admitted to participating in a gang rape, after which the victim had a "hard rubber club pushed into her vagina." Another refugee who was an interrogator said he saw his colleagues cut off a pregnant woman's nipples because she refused to give information about her husband, a suspected communist financial cadre leader.

There is no evidence that CIA-connected Americans themselves either taught or advocated torture. But they certainly knew it was going on and didn't object. Robert F. Gould, Colby's legal adviser in Saigon, says, "Everybody who was there accepted torture as routine. I once taught a course for American Phoenix advisers at Vung Tau —giving lectures on the Geneva Conventions to bald-headed fascists. And I often heard grizzled veterans swap stories about techniques that would make your skin crawl."

And it is also clear that Americans found the torture useful in a Phoenix version of the classic good cop-bad cop approach. "We'd often have a VCI suspect brought over to our compound—we were accustomed to air-conditioning and didn't want to sit around a crummy, hot PIC on a hard wooden bench," explains Charles Yothers, former CIA chief of operations in I Corps. "We'd give the prisoner a cigarette or a cup of coffee and offer him an alternative. Either he could cooperate with us, or he could go back to the PIC and deal with his countrymen.

"They generally talked," Yothers continues. "We didn't have time to deal ourselves with recalcitrant VC. We generally got prisoners when they were ready to talk. We never really asked how they came to that point—by reasoned dialogue or electric shock to the genitals."

The Phoenix program aims to

Colby: "killed, not executed"

Having failed in repeated attempts to reach Phoenix architect William E. Colby at his office, I placed a call to his home in Bethesda, Md. The security was surprisingly light. His wife answered. "Hey Bill," she shouted, "it's long distance," and a minute later the nation's chief spy was on the line.

Q: As you know, the Phoenix program has aroused a lot of controversy and . . .

A: I've been denounced around the world as a killer of 20,000 people.

Q: Are you?

A: I have denied under oath that Phoenix was an assassination program. People unfortunately do get killed in war, some improperly. But most were killed in normal combat situations. Very few were killed in the process of abuse.

Q: As I understand it, Phoenix was aimed at the VCI, the communists' civilian political leaders. How can civilians be killed in "normal combat situations"?

A: They were part of the command and control structure of the war—that's the reality of a people's war—not military or civilian, but part of the command-control structure although they don't wear uniforms.

Q: Didn't Thieu's province chiefs also have a military role? Was it OK for the Viet Cong to kill them?

A: The VC were fighting GVN and killed GVN, but they also killed a lot of innocent people—that's terrorism. Taking out and executing an elected village chief, that's assassination.

Q: I've been told by Americans and Vietnamese directly involved that under Phoenix VCI were routinely targeted and executed.

A: Killed, not executed. There were things that took place that should not have, but the directives were very clear. Active enemy agents were killed in the course of arrest or attack. Their command structure was part of the overall battle.

Q: Aren't all political leaders also military leaders in a war, any kind of war? The President of the United States is commander-in-chief. Where do you draw the line?

A: Would it have been wrong to kill Hitler in World War II?

Q: Would it have been wrong to kill Ho Chi Minh? Would you call that an assassination?

A: I wouldn't characterize that one way or another.

meet the Viet Cong Infrastructure attack with stern justice, with equal stress on both words.—Colby, sworn testimony, House Foreign Operations Subcommittee, July 19, 1971.

Phoenix victims who survived the torture were sentenced to imprisonment by Pacification Security Committees, extra-legal, non-judicial panels dominated by military and police officials. The PSCs often handled a hundred cases in a single sitting. It was not difficult. Neither defendants nor defense lawyers were allowed to be present. And the decisions were generally based solely on the "confessions" wrung out of captives by the secret police.

What dossiers were considered by the committees were prepared in accordance with SOP-3, the basic Vietnamese Phung Hoang guidelines, which U.S. officials ordered Americans in the program to follow. SOP-3 asks information on:

"Those who act suspiciously: (a) the hesitation or fearful attitude of a dishonest person; (b) contact with those whom we suspect; (c) regular secret colloquies of a certain group of people in the area."

A U.S. military directive sent to American Phoenix advisers describes the PSC kangaroo courts:

"Their purpose is political; their method is administrative detention of those persons reasonably believed to endanger the national security, but *against whom sufficient evidence for a trial is lacking.*

"The test applied," the document continues, *"is not one of proven guilt.* There is no defined burden of proof, as utilized by courts, because the committees are not engaged with violations of law. The committee is concerned with those cases which, due to a lack of evidence, cannot be prosecuted under existing judicial standards."

Under the infamous An Tri law, communist suspects—a category that included "neutralists"—could be incarcerated for up to two years, and the sentences were indefinitely renewable without judicial review.

The guidelines for the PSCs to follow in implementing the An Tri law for Phoenix were written under Colby's direction by his legal adviser, a young foreign service officer named Robert Gould.

"God knows, I've lived with a tremendous sense of guilt," says Gould, now a state prosecutor in Columbus, Ohio. "The responsibility for all of this is on the Americans who pushed the program. We finally made some paper reforms, but it didn't make any difference. The PSCs did whatever the hell they wanted, and the pressure our 'neutralization' quotas put on them meant they had to sentence so many people a month regardless.

"And God," adds Gould, "if you ever saw those prisons."

What have come to be known as "Thieu's infamous political prisons" were in fact filled not by Thieu but the Americans who ran Operation Phoenix. At any given time, according to the U.S. government statistics, about 35,000 Vietnamese were locked up in Con Son, Chi Hoa, Tan Hie , Thu Doc and 38 other "re-education camps" while 10,000 more were held in the interrogation centers. All of the latter and two-thirds of the former were Phoenix victims.

Uncounted hundreds of thousands more Vietnamese were not included either in Phoenix "neutralization" lists or prison populations statistics because they were never sentenced, and held instead on mere suspicion.

"Phoenix had one good effect," says Gould. "It generated so many prisoners that they had to release some of the others who were already in jail."

MAGNUM PHOTOS, INC/PHILIP JONES GRIFFITHS

A 17,000 man secret police force administered interrogations at 44 centers especially built by the CIA.

The most notorious of the political prisons was Con Son, where visiting U.S. congressmen discovered "tiger cages"—5 by 9 foot pits with iron grate ceilings. As many as five inmates—male and female—were crammed into one of these tiny cages, sometimes shackled, often starved and refused even water. "It smelled so foul at times that we wanted to die," one woman who was held there was quoted as saying. "When we asked for water, they dropped lime onto us. It burned our skins and eventually blinded me."

Another prisoner told *Life* magazine that starving inmates stole handfuls of grass on the way back from the beatings they were regularly given by Con Son guards, and "shared lizards, beetles and other insects—we ate them alive, biting off and sharing little pieces."

Robert Komer, Colby's predecessor as head of Phoenix and all other pacification programs, was responsible for the massive American financial aid and advisory support of South Vietnamese correctional institutions at the time the "tiger cages" were discovered.

"They were just regular punishment cells—isolation cells like in every American prison," insists Komer. "I had it all investigated. For that climate those things were a great deal more humane. They were open to the air and sea breezes."

But International Red Cross documents released last month confirm the brutality of the "tiger cages" and the inmate beatings as well. Moreover, the IRC reports, classified secret for years by the U.S. government, reveal that American officials knew of the conditions at Con Son and other political prisons.

"I don't know for sure, but I guess Colby was covering up Con Son too," says Gould. "Nothing really was changed after all that publicity. All we did is empty the tiger cages and add a little more protein to the prisoners' diets.

"And you know, it's never been reported, but the inmates who were taken out of the tiger cages were simply transferred to something they called 'cow cages,' which were even worse," adds Gould, who visited Con Son in 1971.

"Those were barbed-wire cells in another part of the camp. The inmates were shackled inside them for months and left paralyzed. I saw loads of spidery little guys—they couldn't stand and they couldn't walk, but had to move around on little wooden pallets.

"It was a well-known smirking secret in certain official circles that with all the publicity about the tiger cages, no one ever found out about the cow cages."

The director of South Vietnam's Central Phung Hoang Office from 1970 to 1971, Col. Cao Minh Tiep, was appointed Con Son's commandant in 1972, and his Phung Hoang predecessor, Col. Loi Nguyen Tan, later ran Chi Hoa, another of the four major political prisions. Now a refugee living in Winnie, Texas, Tiep refused to discuss either Phoenix or Con Son, but did say, "The problem was, we were too humanitarian toward the communists. That's why we lost the country."

Any American who was in the presence of something which did not meet the laws of war was, first, not to participate, of course. Second, to indicate his displeasure and his rejection of it to the people involved, and third, to report it to higher authority.—Colby, sworn testimony, Senate Armed Services Committee, July 2, 1973.

Sid Towle, the military counterintelligence captain who was so horrified by the ears dumped on his dinner table, reported the incident at a provincial staff meeting later that same week. "It caused no particular concern," he recalls. "Some thought it was funny." Colonel Joy took no action against Major Vinn, but within a month Towle was removed as Phung Hoang adviser in Vung Liem.

"It wasn't just the ears," he explains. "I complained too much in general. For one thing, the Vietnamese, *our* Vietnamese, had their torture center right next door to where I lived. I'd see people go in and hear the screams, but I was told it was taboo to enter and there was no way to stop them." Towle applied for complete release from the Phoenix program, noting in his written request that "war crimes as designated by the Geneva Conventions were not uncommon."

The request was granted, but when Towle arrived at IV Corps headquarters in Can Tho for reassignment, "they threatened to send me to the Cambodian border." "That was a death sentence," he says. "No triple-six ever came back alive from there." Towle made yet another report about Phoenix abuses, this time directly to the IV Corps commander. Shortly thereafter Col. Joy received a mild reprimand and Towle was ordered out of IV Corps to Saigon but given no new assignment. A friend at headquarters warned him not to stop back at Vung Liem, adding, "You might be shot."

Towle, finally given a new job, was spending his last few months of Vietnam duty monitoring intelligence reports from the Ho Chi Minh Trail when orders came from Washington withdrawing his sensitive MOS 9666 classification. Before he left Saigon, he managed to obtain a copy of an "eyes only" cable from IV Corps addressed to CORDS pacification director George Jacobson and chief Phoenix adviser John Tilton:

"A records check of a Phung Hoang district adviser in Vung Liem district, Vinh Long province, who had asked for a release from the program, vividly pointed out the potential problems we face if an individual with unfavorable file comments is assigned to a sensitive CORDS activity . . . the case appalled all of us here . . . Capt. Towle had a negative attitude toward the entire Phung Hoang program . . . and adversely commented on the moral standards of the South Vietnamese in the program."

What have come to be known as Thieu's infamous political prisons were in fact not filled by Thieu but by the Americans who ran Operation Phoenix

The cable concludes by recommending more careful screening of present and future Phoenix advisers to "reduce chances of assignment of unsuitable personnel."

I've been denounced around the world as a killer of 20,000 people.—Colby, telephone interview, June 26, 1975.

Phung Hoang. An all-seeing, all-powerful mythical bird of prey. That image suggests a grim grandeur Phoenix never actually approached. For all the suffering and bloodshed it caused and countenanced, the operation failed totally in its mission to destroy the communist brain trust. What it did accomplish is even more sinister.

Statistics don't really tell the story, but they give some indication of its scope. Colby himself put the Phoenix death toll at 20,587. That figure has been widely quoted. But it covers only the three and a half years Colby was in Saigon.

The grand total is a state secret, but it is possible to make an educated guess. The killer squads were active for at least three years before Colby arrived in Saigon, and the full Phoenix operation continued for almost four years after he had gone. Assuming that fewer were murdered before the program was formalized, and that the number also declined after American troops were withdrawn, a conservative estimate would be 40,000 dead.

Dead is dead, as PRU adviser John Wilbur said. But it appears that of the 40,000 killed, only 8,000 were true assassinations. They were the "VCI" targeted, often in error, for death.

The total imprisoned is harder to compute, but a source close to Colby puts it at "several hundred thousand," noting that most were held a few months without being sentenced and are therefore not included in Phoenix "neutralization" statistics. If only those who were counted are considered, the total still comes to at least 50,000.

The figures both appall and raise an interesting question. If one or two or three hundred thousand Vietnamese were killed or jailed, and the greatest estimate of VCI strength never exceeded 80,000, who then was "neutralized" by Phoenix?

The answer is inescapable: uncounted tens of thousands of innocent bystanders, all civilians. "I've seen some of the classified neutralization lists," says a former high-level Phoenix official, "and they include a shocking number of women identified as 'VC nurses' and even some children. Ten and eleven year olds.

"How many My Lais are hidden in those statistics is anybody's guess."

Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Convention states:

"In the case of armed conflict . . . the following acts shall be prohibited. The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized people." ●

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Dr. Nork will see you now

A decade of botched surgeries has spawned a growth industry in Sacramento—$10 million in judgments against John Nork are already in, 25 more suits are pending

For 22 weeks, all through the summer and fall of 1973, the parade of cripples hobbled one by one to the witness stand in the Sacramento courtroom. Jerome Keating seated himself gingerly, no longer able to feel when his buttocks hit the seat. Curtis Jackson hunched forward with his shirt sleeves rolled up, his arms so painful that he could not bear even the pressure of cloth on them. Vivian DeLaTorre showed the cane and left leg brace she needed to keep from falling over. Betty Jean Jones, partially crippled and faced with a life of constant pain, hardly needed to explain why she could no longer work. And Shirley Diane Hart told the court how she came to be wearing an artificial leg.

In addition to their misery, this Hieronymus Bosch collection of witnesses had in common one man, Dr. John G. Nork, perhaps the worst physician ever to practice medicine in the United States. The malpractice case in which they were testifying centered on a young grocery clerk, Albert Gonzales, who came to Nork in November 1967 with spondylolisthesis, the forward slippage of the fifth lumbar vertebra. Nork decided to operate, and a grateful and trusting Gonzales woke up from anesthesia to kiss his surgeon's hand in gratitude. But by the time he left the hospital, Gonzales had such severe back and leg pain that he could not return to work. He began to drink heavily, and over the next few years attempted to take his own life three times.

In 1971 the already severely depressed Gonzales was told that he had testicular cancer. His new doctor testified at the malpractice trial that the emotional difficulties brought on by the botched back surgery had impaired his patient's amenability to cancer therapy and thus reduced his life expectancy. In order to minimize the size of the inevitable settlement, Nork argued that he should not have to pay lost future earnings to a man expected to die of cancer within three years. This astonishing plea failed to move Superior Court Judge B. Abbott Goldberg, who awarded Gonzales $3.7 million. Of that, $500,000 has been paid by Sacramento's Mercy Hospital, where the surgery was performed; the remaining $3.2 million judgment against Nork is still on appeal. If the financial judgment seemed harsh, the spiritual one was more so. In his 196-page decision, Judge Goldberg described Nork as "an ogre, a monster feeding on human flesh," said his conduct was "beyond depravity" and called the pyramiding malpractice cases against him a "Grand Guignol of medical

ILLUSTRATION BY RICH GROTE

horrors."

Litigations resulting from Nork's bungled surgeries have now spawned a growth industry in Sacramento, California. A score of lawyers is caught up in legal crossfire surrounding the most expensive series of malpractice cases ever brought against an American doctor and the hospitals he worked for. Judgments and settlements in the first 24 cases have totaled slightly over $10 million(including the portion of the Gonzales ruling currently on appeal). Only a shortage of courtrooms in Sacramento slows the tide of litigation pending against the 47-year-old doctor. Keating v. Nork goes to trial on August 18, followed by Wilfong v. Nork on August 25, Betty Jean Jones v. Nork on October 3, Jacob Jones v. Nork on November 4, McCauley v. Nork on November 25 and Goorabian v. Nork on December 1. In all there are 25 plaintiffs waiting their turn to take the embattled doctor to trial.

When all the trials are over, John Nork's place in the *Guinness Book of Records* will undoubtedly be secure. What is less clear is just how much of an aberration a surgeon like John Nork really is. In testimony last month before a House commerce subcommittee, Dr. Sidney Wolf, of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen's Health Research Group, estimated that 3.2 million unnecessary operations are performed each year. That represents 17.6 percent of all operations performed, and at an average cost of $1,500, the total bill to patients comes to a staggering $4.8 billion.

But even if John Nork's malpractice had been a relatively isolated phenomenon, the fact that he could perform incompetent surgery for more than a decade is a compelling indictment of the willingness of doctors to police themselves. The same physicians who referred patients to Nork, who joined him in the operating room and reviewed his cases, claim there was no way to tell that the orthopedist was running a virtual slaughterhouse, turning out one cripple after another with his needless surgeries. Not until injured patients began taking Nork to court did the medical profession express concern, and even after litigation started, it took Nork's peers over four years to strip him of his surgeon's license.

When Dr. John G. Nork arrived in Sacramento in 1961, nothing in his past could raise a patient's suspicion. The son of a Pennsylvania carpenter, Nork won academic and football scholarships to Columbia, where he set a record for the longest run from scrimmage in school history—93 yards. After finishing medical school at Columbia, interning at the University of Wisconsin and doing his surgical residency at Marquette, Nork served in the Air Force and went on to complete a three year orthopedic residency at Duke. The young doctor proceeded to pass the first part of the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery exams and then put in two years at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California.

When Nork decided to go into private practice, it was his good friend Travis neurosurgeon Hal Holland who suggested he look to Sacramento, 40 miles northeast of Fairfield. There he found a position with Dr. Raymond Willerius, dean of the community's orthopedic surgeons, who was taken by the new man's impeccable credentials.

"All the girls loved him," remembers Roberta Hendrick, a medical records secretary at Mercy Hospital who was always impressed by the clear, legible surgery reports Nork turned in. When a Mercy nurse experienced back trouble, she asked her girlfriends in surgery to recommend the best orthopedist. Their unanimous recommendation: John G. Nork. Among his other patients were the Mercy Hospital pathologist, Dr. Saul Friedlander, the family of Dr. Holland and Jo Austin Branson, secretary to Sister Redempta, a Mercy administrator.

A judge described Nork's conduct as "beyond depravity" and labeled him "an ogre, a monster feeding on human flesh"

Patients appreciated the relaxed, informal bedside manner of the short, athletic surgeon. When one patient complained that he was thirsty, Nork told the nurses to hand him a beer. If he noticed that a patient seemed down, Nork cheerfully prescribed a half pint of bourbon. The drink would boost the patients' spirits; so did the reassurances of attending nuns, who told them, "You have one of the finest doctors on our staff."

One of the things about this charming physician that most impressed the sisters of Mercy Hospital was his generous policy of providing free care to all members of the clergy. Later, when he had moved his wife and three children into a $95,000 home, Nork would invite athletes at adjacent Jesuit High School to swim in his pool. As team physician he tended to the players' medical needs while trying to be an effective recruiter for his alma mater, Columbia. And despite all his commitments, Nork still voluntarily served, at various times, on the insurance review, utilization, sports-medicine and disaster committees of the Sacramento County Medical Society.

In spite of all this, the seeds of Nork's troubles were planted almost immediately. In August 1962, he asked Raymond Willerius for permission to do a laminectomy on a 39-year-old deliveryman, Arthur Freer. Although Nork has since been sued for a number of different operations, it is the laminectomy that has caused most of his legal difficulties. The procedure was developed in the 1930s to alleviate the pain brought on when a herniated or ruptured disc presses against nerves inside the spine. A bread and butter operation for neurosurgeons (at least 50,000 are done each year at a cost ranging from $700 to $1,000), it involves cutting away a portion of the spinal column and then removing the troublesome disc material to relieve the pain.

Although some medical experts question the efficacy of using the procedure liberally, nearly everyone agrees that a laminectomy done correctly on a patient with a truly ruptured disc can be effective. But when done improperly, the operation can have horrifying consequences. Rough handling of surgical instruments can cause direct nerve damage or lead to the most common complication—arachnoiditis—in which scar tissue constricts nerves and disrupts their function. The results can include anything from impotence to paralysis. And that is precisely why many experienced orthopedists prefer to leave laminectomies in the hands of neurosurgeons who specialize in delicate intraspinal surgery.

It is also why Willerius balked in 1962 at his associate's request to do a laminectomy on Freer. Although it was certainly true that many orthopedists did laminectomies, and that Nork had done them at Travis with his friend Hal Holland, Willerius adamantly denied the request. "I don't want you to do lumbar laminectomies," he told him bluntly.

Nork solved the problem by waiting until his boss went on vacation before hospitalizing Freer. On August 21, 1962, he performed his first Sacramento laminectomy. At the time Nork himself

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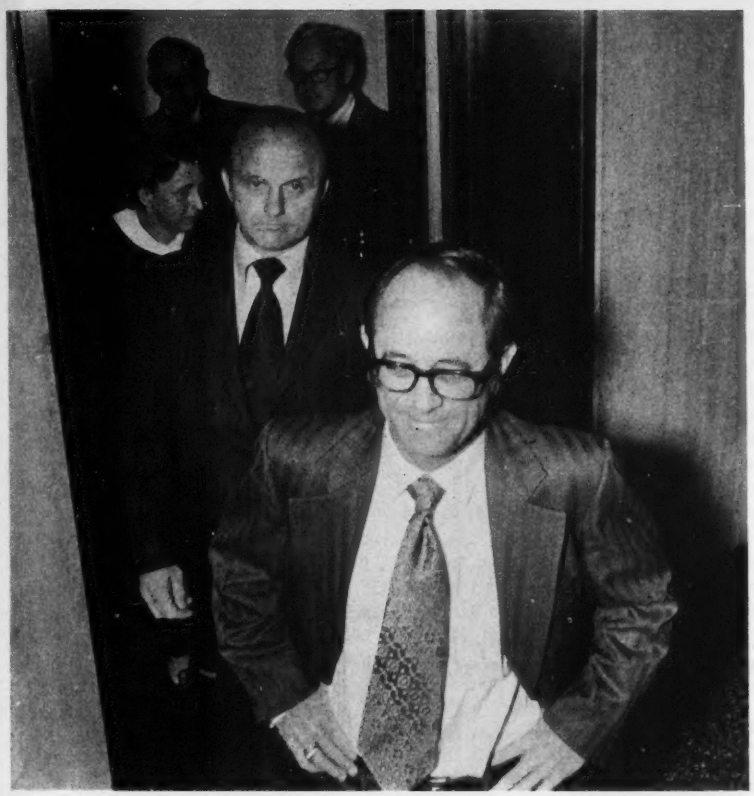
Roger Rapoport, whose book The Super Doctors *will be published in November by Playboy Press, last reported for* New Times *on Patty Hearst.*



Dr. John G. Nork following one of his lawyers into court.

wasn't feeling up to par. About a week before operating on Freer, the young surgeon had developed ataxia—an inability to coordinate voluntary muscular movements. For three weeks after the Freer procedure he experienced double vision, was easily fatigued, slurred his speech and found himself so uncoordinated that he had trouble putting his pants on without bracing himself against a wall. His wife, Florence, noticed that he was sleeping more than usual, appeared to be in a fog and did not seem to be "one of us."

The surgeon's problems paled by comparison to those of Arthur Freer. He had come out of Nork's operating room in shock, without feeling in his buttocks or groin, unable to defecate or urinate, the motion and power in his feet impaired. He was, in short, totally disabled.

Nork reported all of these complications in the patient's medical records but blamed them on the anesthesiologist. Years later, in deposition, he would admit there was no medical explanation for this charge. Meanwhile, when Willerius returned from vacation, rather than dismissing his associate, he simply took over Freer's case. Freer was eventually sent to San Francisco specialists, who in another operation failed to repair all the damage Nork had done.

Three weeks after Nork's operation on Freer, Holland sent the orthopedist, still suffering from ataxia, to other consultants. Nork was released from the University of California Medical School following four days of inconclusive tests. The orthopedist was sent home with pills and seemed fine until he had a seizure in his back yard a short time later, and passed out. With Holland's help, Nork recuperated and he returned to UC for an October 31 checkup. It was concluded that he was doing "extremely well."

But psychologically, Nork was down. Depressed by the way illness had cut into his work and concerned that he wasn't producing, the young surgeon began experimenting with a variety of drugs in 1963. Eventually he settled on the amphetamine Preludin (ordinarily prescribed for weight reduction) because no one, not even his wife, could detect the impact of this upper. By writing his own prescriptions and supplementing them with the free Preludin provided by drug company detailmen, the doctor had all the amphetamines he needed. Over the next eight years he would, by his own admission, average eight Preludin daily—eight times the maximum recommended dose. All this speed made him feel so active that he regularly took Equanil and Donnatal to come back down.

Buoyed by this secret drug regimen, Nork received another big boost in July 1963, when Willerius suffered a stroke. He bought out his partner's practice for $30,000 and quickly became one of the community's busiest young orthopedists. He also resumed performing the laminectomies Willerius had forbidden him to do while they practiced together.

While the hopped-up Nork was busy building his questionable practice, a young lawyer named Ed Friedberg was quietly beginning to investigate the orthopedist's methods. Years later he would catch up with Nork and in the process earn himself a small fortune. The seeds, though, were planted in 1963, when Arthur Freer brought the story of his botched surgery to Friedberg. Together they filed the first malpractice suit against Nork and set out in search of professional colleagues to testify that Nork had bungled Freer's surgery.

Friedberg finally found a neurosurgeon friend who agreed to consult on the Freer case. "I'm on the outs with Nork," the doctor explained. "I'd love to find a case against the guy." But after reviewing Nork's records, the consultant reported he could find no evidence. He also said there was no truth to the rumor that the orthopedist had suffered a nervous breakdown in 1962—failing to mention the ataxia he had treated for Nork a year earlier. Friedberg became discouraged and eventually dropped the case. What he didn't realize then was that his consultant, Hal Holland, was not only one of Nork's closest friends but also his co-surgeon. Ten years later, during the Gonzales trial, the judge would note that the whole tragedy could have been avoided if Holland had told the truth about his friend Nork in 1963.

Holland and Nork continued working together until a disastrous surgery in late 1964. Jo Austin Branson, a medical secretary, had come to them with back and leg trouble, the result of an auto accident. In the midst of a laminectomy, Nork broke her back in two places. Holland helped cover his co-surgeon's tracks by convincing the woman that she had broken her back in the car wreck. Then he joined with his colleague in performing a second operation to repair the damage done by the first. Postoperatively, Holland helped persuade the woman they had saved her life. Although he did not do any more operations with

John Nork, Holland kept their little mistake a secret.

In January 1965, shortly after ending his professional relationship with Holland, Nork flunked both the written and oral sections of the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery exams. While nothing in the medical licensing system requires a surgeon to win the board's approval, doing so confers considerable professional prestige. Nork took the exams again in 1966 and 1967, failing both times before permanently giving up his dream of certification.

Nork's failure did not prevent him from stepping up the pace of laminectomies—now performed alone—and of other operations. In 1965 the surgeon reached the height of his earning power—$47,964. Nonetheless, his debts would pile up over the next five years. Living beyond his means in a dream home he couldn't afford, sued by Willerius for failure to pay off his obligation on the practice, at times behind on his income tax payments, Nork borrowed on his insurance policies, took a loan at 18 percent interest from a finance company and even borrowed from Wells Fargo to pay off the Bank of America. Sometimes Nork would try to laugh off his money worries. The wife of Clarence Nelson (who was terrorized into unnecessary surgery by a false representation of a possible malignancy) once asked the doctor why he was always at the hospital. Nork replied facetiously, "I have to work hard to pay off my malpractice insurance." As money became a chronic worry, Nork turned to increasingly desperate and unethical tactics to induce patients into unnecessary surgery.

Through 1965, the catalogue of Nork's disasters began to expand. In the spring of that year, Nork did reconstructive foot surgery on Shirley Diane Hart, a crippled orphan, hoping to make her brace-free. Unfortunately, she developed a post-operative infection. Instead of treating the problem with antibiotics, Nork's solution was to fuse new bone in the infected field. The germs simply feasted on the clean bone graft, melting away the fusion. Undaunted, Nork repeated this procedure three more times, giving the infection just the culture it needed to develop into osteomyelitis. At one point Shirley Hart asked the orthopedist to get a second opinion.

"Well, I am the best there is in Sacramento," he replied, "and if you want to find another doctor, go and find yourself another doctor."

"No, I trust you," replied the patient, frightened of being abandoned. In 1967 Nork rewarded the trust of this young woman, who then wanted to become a nun, by sending an effusive letter of recommendation to Mother Teresita of the Sisters of Mercy. After praising her character, the doctor went on to point out that she had made "constant steady improvement" under his care. The following year other surgeons were forced to amputate her hopelessly diseased right leg below the knee.

Other patients were as reluctant as Shirley Hart to find fault with their physician. Even after rulings against Nork began coming in, patients located by attorney Ed Friedberg's investigator often refused to authorize release of their medical records. Some kicked the investigator out of their homes, and one husband of a limping Nork surgery patient declared that "anybody [who] calls Nork negligent or incompetent is full of owl shit."

Betty Jean Jones was one such remarkably loyal Nork patient. In 1965 she underwent the first of three laminectomies (and two later spinal fusions)

"I trust you," Shirley Hart told Dr. Nork after her surgery. The next year other doctors amputated her hopelessly diseased right leg below the knee

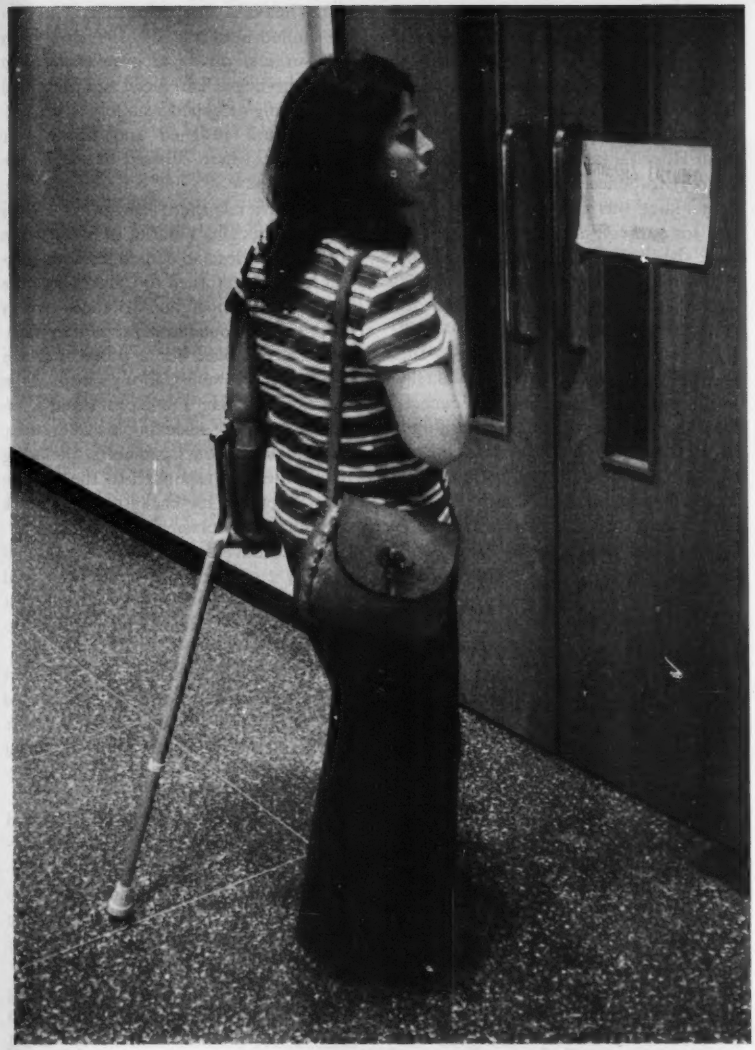
which left her unable to return to work as a waitress. After the last operation, a neurosurgeon she insisted on calling in for consultation explained that her nerves had been so badly damaged by prior surgeries she would have to learn to live with the pain. Years later, after Nork had been driven out of Sacramento, Jones remained convinced that he had been the only doctor concerned about her welfare. She made an unsuccessful attempt to reach her old orthopedist long distance in Laramie, Wyoming, where he was job-hunting. Nork would later admit that all the operations on Betty Jones had been unnecessary.

Late that same year, 1965, Nork used a remarkable technique to terrorize another patient, Gerald Heppner, into an immediate laminectomy. Such surgery is generally called for only after long-term conservative care has failed. Nork used an X-ray of the spinal cord region—known as a myelogram—to sell his patient on the need for an operation. To do so, he injected the radio-opaque fluid used in the procedure at the level of suspected pathology—a practice that is both dangerous and misleading. Beside the possibility of injuring the patient, such an injection will often leave the mistaken impression on an X-ray that there is a ruptured disc even when there really isn't one. It later turned out that Nork had given the same misleading injection to 11 other patients and had used the results to sell some of them on the need for laminectomies. In 1966, during one such operation that would leave Roberta Hendrick partially crippled, Nork allowed his assistant surgeon—Roy Stanford—to depart midway through in order to operate at another hospital. The orthopedist then commandeered a nurse, against her will, to stand in—a glaring breach of surgical procedure.

Yet another operation during that period helps reveal why Nork's botched work was allowed to continue unchallenged for so long. In 1966 Nork performed a laminectomy on Dorothy Gebhard and in a glaring error removed some crucial nerve fibers. He sent them along with other specimens to the hospital pathologist. The pathologist later testified that he did not consider finding these nerve fibers remarkable. He explained that he had encountered the same thing involving other surgeons on two previous occasions, and concluded that Dr. Nork had shown integrity by sending them along at all. The pathologist didn't investigate Nork's mistake any further.

Hospital reviews of cases during that period certainly weren't devised to maximize the chance of discovering

Nork's victims: Roberta Hendrick (above) was partly crippled; Shirley Hart (right, top) lost a leg; Albert Gonzales (right, below) has severe back pain.



Nork's malpractice. For one thing, Nork served on and at one time chaired the Medical Review Committee at Mercy. For another, as many as 40 to 50 cases were reviewed during a single lunch hour, and at one meeting, a committee doctor was even asked to review his own work.

No doubt it made things considerably more difficult that Nork had been filing a stream of falsified progress reports ever since 1962, when he disabled Arthur Freer and blamed it on the anesthesiologist. As his surgery patients left the hospital with a broken back or a foot drop, Nork would write "Complications: none" on their discharge sheets. Sometimes, however, the cover-ups seemed embarrassingly obvious. Nork released one patient who couldn't even walk with a report that he "has done extremely well." A simple check of the nurses' clinical record for the same period would have shown that the man was taking morphine sulfate for pain and had to be assisted to the lavatory. In the case of another patient, Nork's report showed that he operated on the patient's left side when the symptoms were on the right. But no one was asking even the simplest questions.

The roof finally began to cave in during 1968, after electrician Curtis Jackson came to Nork complaining of a stiff neck. Four days after his initial visit, Nork called to say he was "scared" by Jackson's X-rays, and urged immediate hospitalization. Jackson suggested consulting a neurosurgeon, but the physician replied that was unnecessary because he had Dr. Roy Stanford (the assistant who walked out in the midst of the Roberta Hendrick operation) to assist him. Nork proceeded to perform a cervical fusion on Jackson, who emerged from surgery with causalgia—intractable pain and hypersensitivity of the skin. He now walks with his arms crooked in front of him. They hurt so much that he is unable to put on a long-sleeved shirt. A year later, on January 20, 1969, Curtis Jackson filed suit for malpractice. His lawyer was Ed Friedberg. The case would ultimately be settled for $150,000.

In the interim, Nork continued to operate. Truck driver James King came to see the orthopedist about his aching back in mid-1968. King had degenerative disc disease, which is generally treated conservatively with braces, physical therapy and medication; moreover, King was reluctant to have an operation. Nork put on the screws anyway, interrupting King's wife three times on her job at Montgomery Ward's in downtown Sacramento. He warned her that the matter was urgent and said ominously that her

husband's condition made him a menace on the highway. After continuing pressure, James King underwent a laminectomy on August 22, 1968. The patient, who had worked until the day of his surgery, experienced the post-operative troubles characteristic of Nork's laminectomies—numbness, cramps and other difficulties that kept him off his job for seven months. The complications of the operation have now grown to the point where King can no longer drive and is totally disabled.

In that same year, 1968, a high school basketball player, Alan Dankman, came to Nork after spraining his right knee driving for a lay-up. The patient later testified that Nork did a five minute examination on him which did not include X-rays—and then concluded that immediate surgery was mandatory if Dankman ever wanted to play sports again. The orthopedist was so anxious to get going that he didn't even bother completing the routine pre-operative physical exam. After the surgery, Nork falsified his surgery report to cover up the rush job. Dankman later successfully sued on the grounds that the surgery was unnecessary. He settled for $50,000. Today, half a dozen other patients are in the midst of suing Nork on charges that he pushed them into unnecessary knee surgery.

Nork's record of rushed and unnecessary surgery apparently did not weigh heavily on his conscience. Early in 1969 he had the audacity to serve as an expert medical witness in a malpractice suit against a respected fellow Sacramento orthopedist. At issue in Dorothy Schroeder's case was whether conservative care would have been preferable to removing cartilage from her knee. After a careful review of the medical records, Nork solemnly testified: "I feel that a trial of conservative care such as exercise would very definitely be indicated and that surgery could [have been] avoided."

Even more ironic is the fact that on January 10, 1969, a mere seven weeks prior to testifying on behalf of Dorothy Schroeder, Nork performed what he would ultimately admit was a needless laminectomy on Dorothy's husband. Hans Schroeder eventually sued his wife's witness, collecting $150,000 from Nork and $125,000 from Mercy Hospital in a 1974 out-of-court settlement.

By 1970, though, lawyer Ed Friedberg was busy gathering evidence against Nork; a list of clients that began with electrician Curtis Jackson in January 1969 was fast expanding. Meanwhile, Mercy Hospital, frightened by the impending suits and finally aware that Nork was falsifying his surgery reports, established a supervisory committee on June 12, 1970, to monitor the orthopedist's work. Nork did not relate well to that kind of control. Two weeks later, on June 28, he tried to rush Jesuit High football player Ronald Czarnicky into Mercy San Juan Hospital (also run by the Sisters of Mercy) for knee surgery. After the student's knee was shaved and he was prepped for surgery, an orderly wheeled him into the operating room where Nork's monitoring physician immediately canceled the procedure on the grounds that it was unnecessary.

Undeterred, Nork emerged from the operating room to tell Czarnicky's father that the operation was canceled because his assistant hadn't shown up on time. This, Nork added, was the last straw. He said he was never going to do another surgery at a Mercy Hospital. Then the orthopedist transferred the patient to American River Hospital (where his privileges had not been curtailed) and did the knee procedure.

But Nork did return to Mercy three months later, on September 14, 1970, when he slipped Wanda Martinez past the monitor to put a metal plate in her leg. Another surgeon would later remove the plate, and the woman ended up suing Nork on the grounds that her operation had been unnecessary.

After operating on Martinez, the orthopedist apparently decided that performing surgery at Mercy caused more problems that it was worth. This created a little public relations problem for Nork four days later, when Jesuit High football player Earl Ternus sustained a knee injury while being tackled. As team physician, Nork examined the athlete and told his parents that surgery was urgent. They asked that it be performed at Mercy, since they were Catholic. Nork told them he preferred American River because he could schedule the operation sooner, and the parents reluctantly agreed. The doctor operated and Ternus encountered post-surgical problems requiring a second operation by another doctor. In 1974 the student collected $50,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

The 1970 Ternus operation was the doctor's last known Sacramento surgery. His practice continued to wane, suffering a major setback in March 1971, when the first malpractice verdict came in. Vivian DeLaTorre, who had come away from Nork back surgery in 1968 partially paralyzed, without control over her bowels or bladder and lacking sensation in her genitals, was awarded $450,000. Soon after the award was declared, the Mercy administration invited Nork to discuss two dozen of his patient files in a special meeting. The doctor stalled until May 24, 1971, when his full surgical privileges were reduced to basic privileges. Disgraced and prevented from doing orthopedic surgery at the hospital, Nork resigned and headed for Wyoming, where he tried to win a temporary license.

Officials there learned of Nork's past by checking him out in Sacramento medical circles and denied his license request. Nork returned to California at the end of the summer, and worked six weeks for a Kaiser Foundation hospital in Napa. When he applied for a position at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Martinez, a San Francisco suburb, officials set about checking his references. At that time, four specialists, including two surgeons, responded to the government's request for background on Nork with hearty endorsements.

"I have found that he is an extremely competent physician in his field of orthopedic surgery," wrote one. "It gives me a great deal of pleasure to recommend him."

Another indicated: "He is a most competent orthopedist. . . . I would choose him for my family and myself. He is considered an honest and competent practitioner. I have no hesitation in recommending him."

"I have personally scrubbed and assisted him in major surgery on numerous occasions," said a third. "In my opinion his judgment and technical skills have been excellent. I consider him to be honest and completely ethical. I consider his general character above reproach."

And another physician, referring to Nork's legal difficulties, said: "This malpractice problem is an atrocity and it is criminal that a capable well-trained physician can be destroyed by malpractice suits."

Most important of all was the recommendation from an official of the Sacramento County Medical Society—four of whose committees Nork had served on. Without bothering to mention the fact that his group had recommended that Nork's insurance company settle the DeLaTorre case or indicating that Nork had been forced to resign from Mercy after his privileges had been reduced, the Society official indicated: "He [Nork] is known locally as being professionally and organizationally well-read. I am pleased to commend this physician to your favorable consideration; he will be an asset to your professional community."

So, acting largely on the strength of these recommendations, the VA hired Nork on October 12, 1971, to begin doing orthopedic surgery on veterans. Had

the VA contacted Ed Friedberg, they would have received quite a different reading on Dr. Nork. Over the years, Friedberg's file on the orthopedist had swelled to thousands of pages of evidence.

In 1972 the lawyer made an offer to settle five pending cases out of court for $1 million, and pledged not to initiate any further litigation against Nork. In retrospect, it was an incredible deal. So overwhelming was the evidence, even then, that Nork, the sisters at Mercy Hospital and the Sacramento County Medical Society were begging the doctor's insurance company, American Mutual Liability (AMLICO), to settle. But AMLICO refused, and shortly thereafter Friedberg decided to devote full time to the string of suits he had pending against John Nork. To prepare for the Gonzales trial alone, he would spend $175,000 in research and staff work.

In court the lawyer's diligent research, which even included an attempted laminectomy on a corpse, paid off consistently. So well prepared was he that in one early trial—Roberta Hendrick's in 1972—Friedberg immediately destroyed the credibility of a witness introduced by Nork's attorneys. After medical secretary Jo Austin Branson finished telling the jury about Nork's fine care, Friedberg produced hospital records showing that Branson was the very woman whose back Nork had inadvertently broken in the midst of that November 1964 laminectomy performed with Holland. After the trial ended (with a $595,000 verdict for Ms. Hendrick), defense witness Branson filed her own malpractice suit against John Nork.

Friedberg's evidence also undercut one Nork defense after another. At first, Nork had defended "his surgery as necessary and proper. At the Gonzales trial, he reversed himself and said operations on roughly 30 patients had been unnecessary and that 24 of them had been negligent. Nork added that his heavy consumption of drugs during the year of the Gonzales surgery (which averaged 8.5 Preludin, 4.5 Equanil and 3.6 Donnatal a day) had been responsible for his faulty clinical judgment. Despite all this, Nork disavowed blame for his earlier misrepresentations, claiming his insurance company had unscrupulously duped him into lying. He has since filed suit against AMLICO, alleging that if they had settled with Friedberg, he might still be practicing medicine today.

The irony is that Nork is probably right. Even as the suits rolled in, this "ogre," this "monster feeding on human flesh," was hard at work on veterans. After hearing about the malpractice judgments against Nork, the hospital demoted him to the outpatient clinic. He was finally demoted to the medical records library after VA officials learned of the huge Gonzales judgment in 1973. Two months later he left the hospital, and on February 22, 1974, thirteen years after John Nork's arrival in Sacramento, the California Board of Medical Examiners finally revoked his license.

Suddenly, the orthopedists, neurosurgeons, pathologists and other physicians who had looked the other way as Nork maimed his patients voiced pious outrage over what they had been trying to ignore since 1962. But this didn't slow the pace of litigation against doctors like Hal Holland, who was being sued by two patients he had operated on with Nork. In September 1974 Ed Friedberg received a message that Nork was postponing a deposition because his good friend Holland had died of a heart attack at the age of

Attorney Ed Friedberg gathered 30,000 pages of evidence against Nork and earned himself a small fortune

46. Yet even Holland's death didn't get the neurosurgeon off the hook. In April 1975 Holland's executors made a $75,000 out-of-court settlement with Arthur Freer, the patient who started it all off back in 1962.

Today, almost nothing remains of the orthopedist's world in Sacramento. He earns $9,000 a year recruiting paramedics in Scottsdale, Arizona. His dream home has been sold to pay off creditors. His former office is now occupied by Ed Friedberg's allergist. And when the defendant flies in from Arizona, he discovers his loyal old patients testifying against him at one another's trials. No one seems to take his point of view seriously any longer. In the most recent trial, Nork tried to argue that the laminectomy is simply an ineffective procedure. Ed Friedberg shot that one down by pointing out there is a considerable difference between failing to allieviate a patient's symptoms and making him worse. AMLICO—which left the California malpractice market in late 1973 because of skyrocketing costs—ended the trial after three weeks by settling for $350,000.

After prosecuting John Nork nearly full time for three and a half years, Ed Friedberg would like to settle the remaining cases and get on to something else. "I'm really anxious to start going after lawyers," says the attorney, who recently won two legal malpractice suits against the 1974 head of the Sacramento County Bar Association, Jerome R. Lewis. "Lawyers," explains Friedberg, "are worse than doctors."

He is hardly more enthusiastic about politicians. As he watches legislators in Sacramento and other state capitals bend to the current pressure of physicians who want to water down malpractice laws, Friedberg worries that the Norks of the world will be even harder to catch. "There's got to be the incentive of a big judgment to make lawyers willing to take the risk," he claims.

But it is just these incentives that so rankle the nation's doctors, and undoubtedly they have a point. Malpractice rates have driven up the cost of hospital rooms as much as $12 a day; the fees for X-rays, anesthesia and surgical services are also skyrocketing. Office charges by physicians are way up, and doctors claim that they are being forced to practice expensive defensive medicine—more X-rays and more tests—in order to have adequate defense if patients eventually bring suit against them. The AMA and others have asked for a limit on contingency fees for lawyers (now as high as 50 percent), upper limits on malpractice awards and time limits for filing suits. Doctors in Alaska have begun practicing without insurance; in a number of other states physicians are threatening job actions unless their legislatures reform malpractice legislation.

Nonetheless, if the medical profession's solution to rising insurance costs and medical costs means letting doctors such as John Nork go free, then some other answer must be found. Nork's own lawyer, John Harper, believes that had Nork been practicing in a large city rather than in Sacramento, he would never have been caught. In small cities such as Sacramento, he points out, everyone hears when a hospital starts disciplining a doctor. Thus, it is not that hard for an enterprising lawyer, motivated by large settlements, to track down the guilty. But in a big city, even under the present system, the word might never reach an attorney. The result is that plenty of other John Norks go about their business day after day, simply changing hospitals when things get hot. "Why just recently," says Harper, "I looked through the records of another doctor and it was worse than Nork's. Honestly—he would make Nork look like the second coming of Christ." ●

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Jane Perlez

When the Nixon Administration collapsed in disgrace one year ago, many Americans felt a peculiar sense of loss. For moralists and media-freaks, cynics and civics teachers, old-time Nixon-phobes and assorted tilters at windmills, Watergate was a field day, a carnival of vengeance and edification we're not likely to see equaled. Nixon's men and women became totems for venality, indelibly etched in our psyches—and then they slipped away.

Memories are short. David Bowie asked us a few months ago, in his song "Young Americans": "Do you remember your President Nixon? Do you remember the bills he had to pay?" The answer, of course, is yes. We do remember, and we'll never forget. Sometimes it seems we'll never be *allowed* to forget, what with a flood of Watergate confessionals and apologies.

But if we remember well the roles the Watergate crew played in our greatest historical drama, our conceptions of what has happened in the past year to these people are less precise, despite the scattered reports we've all heard of men going to jail or getting out, signing exorbitant book contracts, walking alone by the sea. What follows is a more or less comprehensive list of the men and women who stand identified with Richard Nixon. Where are they now?

"Sure we keep in contact, we're members of a special club," said Tony Ulasewicz, when we reached him to ask what he was doing. "I've made no money and I've accumulated debts for legal fees. But I'm not going to cry baby. It's opened a new facet in my life. I was always on the side of the establishment, now I'm on the opposite side."

Some still insist that Watergate was overplayed. The conservative Washington writer Victor Lasky ("I'm a friend of Nixon's") says: "Which was worse: bungling with some money—even the Democrats did that—or trying to assassinate foreign heads of state?" Stephen Bull thinks the Nixon crew were all "a fine group of people."

Spookiest of all is the voice at the other end of the telephone number given out by the Ford White House for Richard Nixon's San Clemente office. It says: "The number you have reached is not in service at this time, and there is no new number. Please be sure you have checked the telephone directory for the right number and have dialed it correctly. This is a recording."

Spiro Agnew

Then Vice-President, pleaded no contest to tax evasion. Three years of probation, $10,000 fine. Disbarred.

Now Completed half a political-romantic novel, *A Very Special Relationship*, to be published by Playboy Press. Representing Arab investors. Applied to be a distributor of Coors beer in Texas.

Bernard L. Barker

Then Watergate burglar. Pleaded guilty to seven counts. Sentence reduced last month to 11 months already served.

Now Unemployed. Worked with *Harper's* magazine writers on *Cuban Terror and the CIA*, due in November from Harper's Magazine Press.

Patrick Buchanan

Then Nixon's conservative apologist and speechwriter.

Now Writes thrice-weekly column for

St. Louis *Globe Democrat* and New York *Times* syndicate.

Stephen Bull

Then Chief guardian of the tapes, 1973. Appointments secretary, transition carryover to San Clemente.

Now Assistant to the president of Television News Inc., a New York-based video and television news service.

Alexander Butterfield

Then On Friday, July 13, 1973, revealed existence of the tapes to Watergate committee. Keeper of the Oval Office door.

Now Unemployed. Considering job offers, including a university presidency.

Fred Buzhardt

Then Special counsel in charge of tapes until heart attack.

Now Practicing law, Hilton Head, S.C.

John J. Caulfield

Then White House gumshoe. Offered clemency to McCord at a Potomac River overlook.

Now Unemployed. "No one knocking on my door with a job."

Dwight Chapin

Then Glorified valet and appointments secretary. Last month lost appeal on 10 to 30 month sentence for lying to grand jury.

Now Vice-president for W. Clement Stone Enterprises, Chicago. Deciding whether to go to jail or appeal to Supreme Court.

Ken Clawson

Then Brittle presidential image polisher. Head of Office of Communications.

Now PR consultant to Wheelabrator-Frye, makers of coal liquefying plants.

Charles Colson

Then Special counsel. Hired E. Howard Hunt for the Plumbers. Pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice. Sentence reduced last January to seven months already served.

Now Witness before Rockefeller CIA Commission. A convert to Christ, working on a Watergate book for a religious publishing house, Revell.

Tricia and Ed Cox

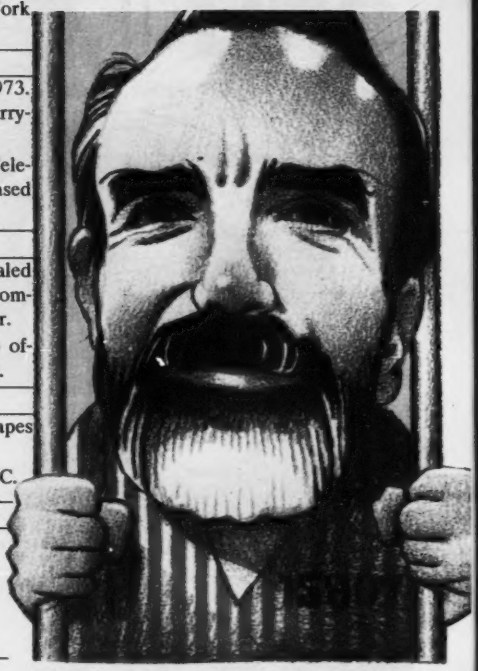
Then Fair-haired daughter and son-in-law.

Now He's a New York lawyer. She's looking after their apartment and frequently visits her parents.

John Dean

Then Special counsel. Warned his President of a "cancer growing" around the office. Pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice. Served four months of a one to four year sentence.

Now Fixing up his new $115,000 house in the Los Angeles suburbs. Writing a Watergate book with an Oct. 1 deadline for Simon & Schuster.



John D. Ehrlichman

Then Ostensibly chief of the Domestic Council. Found guilty in both the Ellsberg break-in and cover-up trials. Sentenced to two and a half to eight years.

Now Hanging out in Santa Fe. Not been seen in his home town, Seattle, for six months. Unemployed. Faces a $400,000 bill for legal fees. Grown a beard, dines at Santa Fe restaurants with several different women. Out of jail while appealing conviction. "Mentally disturbed," says a lawyer friend in Seattle.

Julie and David Eisenhower

Then Dark-haired daughter and son-in-law.

Now She's written *Julie Eisenhower's Cookbook for Children* (Doubleday), which includes Frank Sinatra's recipe for queen cakes and Lynda Johnson Robb's recipe for play cookies. He's in law school in Washington.

Virgilio Gonzalez

Then Watergate burglar. Pleaded guilty to conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping. Did 15 months of a reduced sentence.

Now Back working as a locksmith in Miami.

Patrick Gray

Then Assistant FBI Director, described by Nixon as a "little stupid."

Jane Perlez is a reporter on the staff of the New York Post.

ILLUSTRATION BY BILL NELSON

Now Practicing law in New London, Conn.

Alexander Haig

Then Haldeman's successor as chief of staff.

Now Supreme Commander of NATO forces.

H.R. (Harry Robbins) Haldeman

Then Brush-cut, rigid-faced chief of staff. Found guilty Jan. 1 in cover-up trial. Sentenced to two and a half to eight years.

Now Reportedly wirting his version of Watergate in seclusion at home in Long Beach, Calif. Appealing conviction.

Sally Harmony

Then Secretary to Gordon Liddy. Noticeable mind lapses at Watergate hearing.

Now Secretary to Marriott's vice-president for corporate affairs. Part-time personal secretary to Jeb Magruder.

Lawrence Higby

Then The top Haldeman aide to escape charges.

Now Senior business planner, Pepsico, Purchase, N.Y.

E. Howard Hunt

Then Chief Plumber, master-minded break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. Pleaded guilty to wiretapping, conspiracy and burglary. Sentenced to two and a half to eight years.

Now In jail near Pensacola, Fla. Sirica refused in June to reduce sentence. Beneficiary of one third of $300,000 damage award from wife's death in 1972 air crash.

Tom Huston

Then Architect of infamous "Huston plan" to establish a domestic CIA. Quit Ehrlichman's office in 1971.

Now Practicing real estate law in Indianapolis.

Herbert Kalmbach

Then Personal lawyer. Chief money raiser for Watergate burglars. Pleaded guilty to violating the Federal Corrupt Practices Act. Served a reduced sentence of six months.

Now Hired the law partner of former Democratic Gov. Pat Brown to attempt to win back his suspended legal license.

Herb Klein

Then Benign head of the Office of Communications.

Now Vice-president for corporate relations for Metromedia, L.A.

Richard Kleindienst

Then Attorney General. At confirmation hearing denied any knowledge of Nixon involvement in ITT antitrust case. Pleaded guilty to misdemeanor. Suspended sentence.

Now Washington representative for Algerian government oil interests at reported $120,000 a year.

Egil Krogh

Then Director of White House Plumbers. Pleaded guilty to conspiracy against the rights of a citizen in connection with the break-in at Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. Served four and a half months at Allenwood, Pa.

Now $15,000-a-year political aide to Rep. Paul McCloskey (R-Calif.).

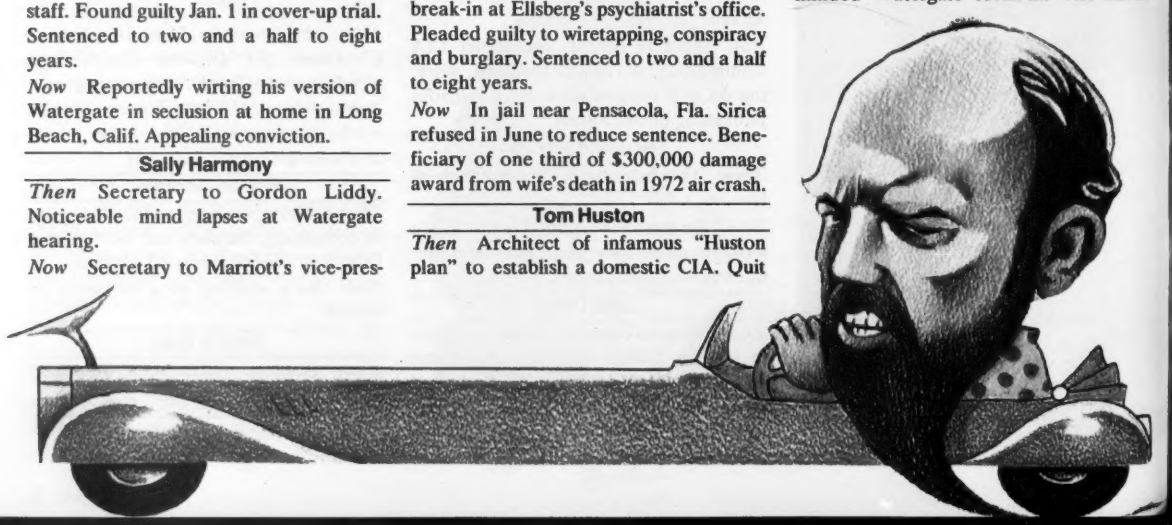
Frederick LaRue

Then Southern political operator. Pleaded guilty to passing $300,000 hush money to Watergate burglars.

Now In prison at Maxwell Air Force Base outside Montgomery, Ala. Halfway through a six month sentence.

Gordon Liddy

Then Counsel to CREEP. Master-minded Watergate break-in. The silent



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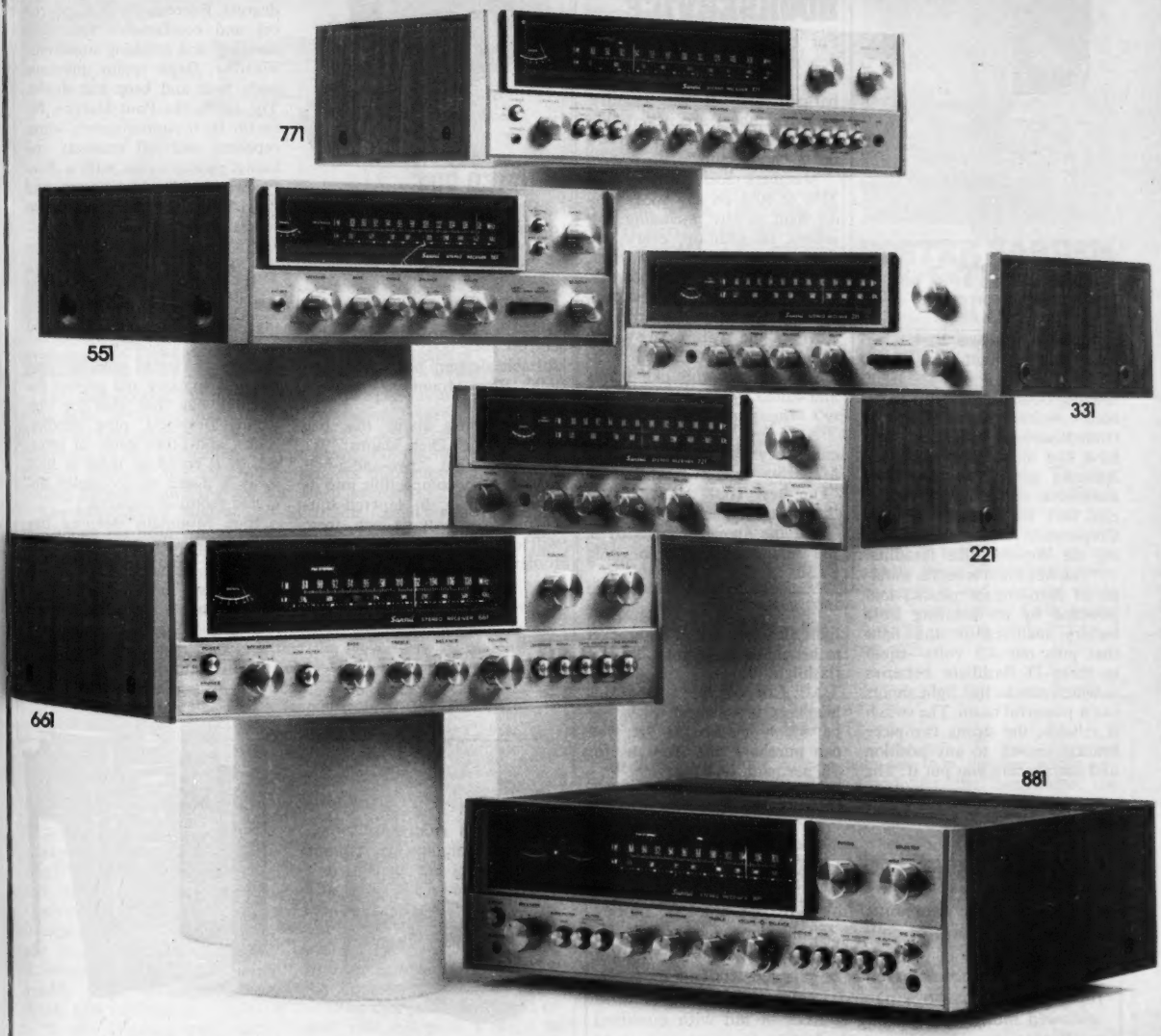

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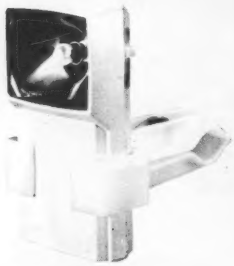


THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

"Ardent bicyclists have long lamented the fact that there was not one well-designed, soundly built bicycle light to be had," writes Bruce Coppola from Roseville, Michigan. "We have had to put up with drag-inducing generators or bulky, unreliable, chintzy battery-powered toys. But now the Wonder Corporation has begun distributing the Wonder Bike Headlite.

"The headlight is small, molded of high-impact plastic, and powered by an amazing little battery included in the light that puts out 4.5 volts—equal to three D flashlight batteries—which means this light shoots out a powerful beam. The switch is reliable, the strong two-piece bracket swivels to any position and stays where you put it. The light also slips out of its bracket to become a powerful palm-size flashlight."

Mr. Coppola told us that this headlight is new and might not be widely distributed yet; you can purchase one from us for $6 postpaid. (A-1)

BOOKSERVICE

For the avid reader and the person who gives books as gifts, BOOKSERVICE is the bargain tool of the century. First, members are never obligated to buy anything, so it's not a "book club."

Members receive discounts of 25% to 60% on any books they do want to buy, *including best sellers*. In addition, every two weeks they receive *Bookletter*, lively and packed with information about books . . . new and old and lots of special bargains. Reviews and features are short, entertaining, stimulating, written by people who like books and edited by the staff of *Harper's Magazine*.

As icing on the members' cake, they also receive *Harper's Magazine* every month (see "The Best Tool" elsewhere on this page for description).

All the above is included in the semi-annual dues of only $7.50. (A-2)

SACKED OUT

One of our favorite photographers, John Diele, offers this restful advice:

"If you're out in the wild, cramped in the back seat of the family car, or crashing on a friend's kitchen floor, do not entrust your body to an uncomfortable sleeping bag. Get Sportline's Blue Mountain Backpack Bag.

"Everything about this bag is appealing," Diele claims: "It's a lightweight two-and-a-half pounds, very compactible into its own stuff bag. Its tapered thirty-four-by-seventy-six-inch form will easily fit and protect a six-footer, head and all. With a temperature rating as low as fifteen degrees Fahrenheit, it is practical and comfortable for most camping and crashing situations. Weather flaps retain precious body heat and keep out drafts. The fill is Du Pont Dacron Fiberfill II; the outer cover, water repellent and soil resistant; the lining, ripstop nylon, with a ninety-seven-inch nylon zipper and drawstring top for maximum temperature control.

"If you happen to be caught in the rain or to roll down a slight grade into a lake, you'll find that this bag has an amazingly fast drying time. It's hand or machine washable.

"The stuff bag can be used not only to carry and protect the sleeping bag, but also for collecting firewood, pine needles, rocks, and other items of interest, or it could be used to haul away a dozen or so apples liberated from an orchard."

Blue Mountain sleeping bag is economically priced at $35 (+$2.50) from us. (A-4)

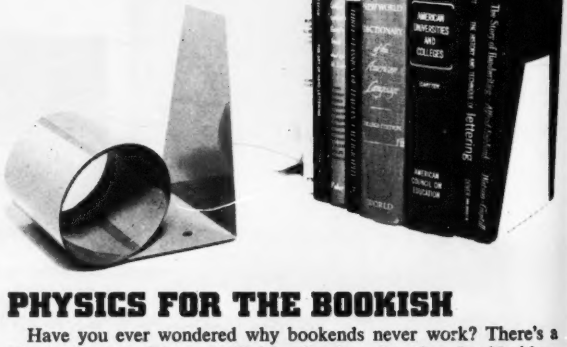
PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Even in these depressing times, there's a lot of money around in the form of college scholarships. Unfortunately, almost all of it is restricted—to people with the highest grades or the poorest parents, to premed students or aspiring engineers, to boys named Leavenworth or girls with widowed mothers. Matching sources of aid with qualified applicants is a Herculean task, but it does not appear to daunt S. Robert Freede's Scholarship Search.

Freede's computers have a data bank of 250,000 items, with a total of $500 million to offer. For $39, he will undertake to provide you with at least five sources (or $5,000 worth) of aid for which you specifically qualify; failing that, he'll refund your money.

Obviously, Scholarship Search can't do more than acquaint you with opportunities; actually getting the cash is your job from then on. But it does seem to have found a way to tilt the cornucopia in your direction.

For $1 you can get detailed information and the application form; then you can decide whether you want to enroll. If you'd rather skip that step, you can enroll immediately for $39. (A-3)

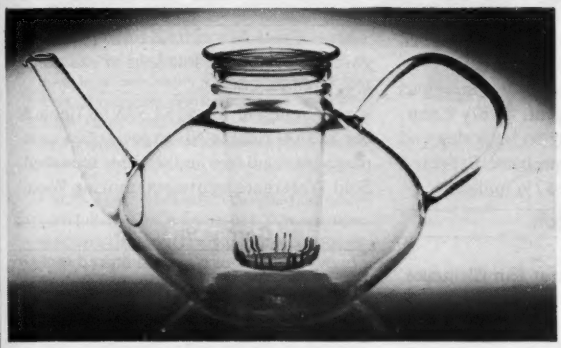


PHYSICS FOR THE BOOKISH

Have you ever wondered why bookends never work? There's a hint in the fact they are called bookends rather than bookholders. Even if you find a pair heavy enough to resist the weight of a number of books, what happens when you remove a couple from the center? Right. The domino theory in action. Well, we've come across a solution that's based more on the enclave theory—and it works. It's called Bookworm and is made by Pentalic Corp. A spring steel coil on one end pulls the books firmly against the flat endpiece. Take out a book or two and the coil rolls up smoothly, keeping the others just as securely in place as before. Simple.

The basic model costs $6.95 and is all steel enameled in red, blue, black, or white. Fancier models—with teak endpieces, for example—really don't look as nice and cost a lot more. Bookworm is available in some stationery and department stores, or by mail through us. (A-5)

A service of Harper's Magazine Co. Items shown here may be ordered following instructions under "How to Order." Tools for Living appears every month in Harper's Magazine. For further information see "The Best Tool" and "Bookservice" below.



SEEING THROUGH TO THE TEA

Tea can soothe the nerves, quiet an upset stomach, cleanse your skin, even dye your ribbons. Its aroma is very subtle; not until you take your first sip can you really appreciate the special fragrance of the Darjeeling, orange pekoe, oolong, or tisane. And the full flavor of the tea can't be brought out unless the water is boiling furiously and the tea can steep properly.

The Museum of Modern Art liked this teapot's appearance so much that it's been placed in the design collection there. The teapot, made out of strong, thin, glass, is pure joy in its shape and simplicity. Tea leaves go into a glass cylinder with slits in the bottom. When the hot water is poured through the leaves and into the pot, a brown cloud spreads slowly through the water until it reaches a consistent color and you know the tea is ready to drink. The problem with most pots is that the leaves stay in, making the second cup too strong. With this pot, you stop the brewing instantly by simply removing the cylinder.

You can get the Jenaer Glas teapot from us for $23. (A-6)

POCKET PACKING

A rucksack that becomes a pocket you can hang from your belt? We hadn't seen anything like that since the Vacuum Cleaner-Nosed Sucker from the *Yellow Submarine* sucked himself into oblivion. But David Rosenduft, a mountain-climbing reader from Brooklyn, New York, told us about it.

"I was climbing near Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and I needed something to carry my photography equipment in when I discovered the pocket pack. This looks like a small zippered tobacco pouch with belt loops, but a full-size nylon backpack with adjustable straps unfolds from it like a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis.

"You can put a great deal of stuff into this pack. I use it to carry all my cameras, lenses, and film, and I also regularly fill the pack with reference and textbooks to read while I'm commuting to classes. The best feature of this pocket pack is that it can be worn all folded up on your belt until you need it and then unfolded into a rucksack to carry anything from groceries to field specimens. It also makes a great overnight bag."

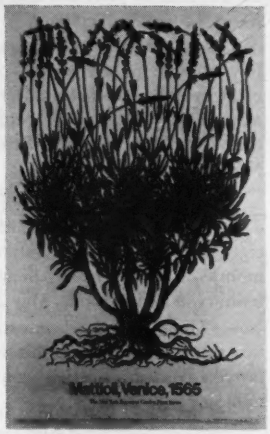
The pocket pack is available in two sizes—small (18"x 11"x6½") for $5 or large (24"x13"x6½") for $6.25. (A-7)

THE BEST TOOL

Harper's Magazine is America's oldest monthly for a good and abiding reason. It has managed to change with the times, to reflect what the society expects of itself in the present moment of its story. The authors who contribute to the magazine (many of them well-known; many of them not) try to draw the lines of what the nation perceives as its moral geography.

But that's not all. Every month the 16-page WRAPAROUND section presents diverse points of view from a variety of people (including its own readers) on subjects of personal concern, e.g., marriage longevity, food, rediscovering your body, living with and without the automobile and family. TOOLS FOR LIVING, examples from which you see sprinkled around this page, is included in WRAPAROUND every month.

As a special introductory offer, you can use the coupon below to receive an eight-month trial subscription for $2.99 with the purchase of any other item on this page. Or, at no extra cost if you join BOOKSERVICE (described elsewhere on this page). If you only want *Harper's*, the eight-month trial is $5.98. (Regular annual price of *Harper's* is $8.97.) (A-8)



POSTER GARDEN

These two-by-three-foot plant prints have beautiful colors, faithfully reproduced by the N.Y. Botanical Gardens people, who found the pictures in one of their old books. One is a giant sunflower, one a lavender, one an assortment of herbs. The three of them look splendid together, but you can also order them separately. To keep the poster in good condition, buy corfoam—a lightweight styrofoam sandwiched between two layers of cardboard—at an art-supply store, rubber-cement the poster to it, and wrap the whole thing with acetate. Each poster is $4.85, and the set is $12.75. (A-9)

HOW TO ORDER

To order, fill in the coupon with the item number which appears at the end of each Tool description, the item name, the quantity of each item you want, the price. Fill in the total price for all items ordered, indicate whether payment is by check or bank card, including card number.

Reminder: *Harper's Magazine* is included at no extra cost with BOOKSERVICE dues. Separately the 8-month trial is $2.99 with the purchase of any other item, $5.98 if purchased alone (regularly $8.97 per year).

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spy who refuses to talk. Sentenced March 23, 1973, to 20 years and $40,000 fine.

Now In prison, Danbury, Conn. Sirica denied a reduction of sentence in May. First eligible for parole after six years and eight months. Wrote an article for *True* magazine's May issue on being an assistant District Attorney in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

James McCord

Then Security chief for CREEP. Served eight weeks of reduced sentence of four months. Released from Allenwood Penitentiary in Pennsylvania, May 29.

Now Unemployed. Plans extensive lecture tour in the fall. Suing his first defense lawyer, Gerald Alch, for a reported $10 million.

Jeb Magruder

Then Mitchell's deputy at CREEP. Pleaded guilty to conspiracy and obstruction of justice. Served reduced sentence of seven months at Allenwood.

Now Moving to Colorado Springs to become vice-president of a Christian missionary group, Young Life.

Fred Malek

Then Haldeman hatchet man, later deputy director of Office of Management and Budget.

Now Senior vice-president of Marriott Corp.

Robert Mardian

Then Campaign lawyer, internal security chief in Justice Department under Mitchell. Found guilty Jan. 1 and sentenced to 10 months to three years.

Now Appealing conviction. In Phoenix, Ariz., at family construction business.

Eugenio Martinez

Then Watergate burglar. Pleaded guilty and served 15 months of a reduced sentence.

Now Worked with fellow burglar Barker on manuscript *Cuban Terror and the CIA.*

John Mitchell

Then Attorney General. Chief of CREEP. Sentenced to two and a half to eight years for perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

Now Appealing decision. Still reportedly gathering income from New York law firm Mudge, Rose. Seen in the company of Washington woman, Mary Gore Dean.

Martha Mitchell

Then Estranged wife of John.

Now Collecting $1,000 a month support. Occasionally working as unpaid dress shop saleswoman in Alexandria, Va.

Richard A. Moore

Then Special counsel. The White House answer to John Dean at Watergate hearings.

Now "Relaxing and working a little," says his wife from their Virginia home. Has just completed a private study on pay television and will return to the television industry in the fall.

Richard Nixon

Then President, resigned August 8, effective August 9, 1974.

Now Edward O. Sullivan, his New York insurance man, visited him mid-July. Reports: "He looks well. Still abstemious on lunch." Literary agent, Swifty Lazar, says he is working daily on book due end of 1976 for Warner Paperback. Expected income from memoirs: $2½ million.

Pat Nixon

Then First Lady.

Now Tends the roses at San Clemente, says Sullivan, her second cousin.

Robert Odle

Then Director of personnel at CREEP. First Watergate committee witness.

Now Deputy assistant secretary for housing management at HUD.

Kenneth Parkinson

Then Lawyer hired by CREEP to defend the committee. Only cover-up trial defendant acquitted.

Now Returned to Washington law practice. Sent a bill of $73,393 to Nixon reelection campaign for legal fees incurred for his defense.

Herbert Porter

Then Magruder underling at CREEP, in charge of scheduling. Pleaded guilty to lying to FBI, served shortest Watergate sentence of 27 days.

Now Manager of father-in-law's construction business, Briggs Co., at Laguna Niguel, Calif.

William Safire

Then Middle-of-the-road speechwriter.

Now Columnist for the New York *Times.*

James St. Clair

Then Chief Watergate defense attorney for Nixon.

Now Again a senior partner in Boston law firm.

Manuel and Fina Sanchez

Then Longtime Nixon servants.

Now According to the White House, taken off the payroll last fall. Now paid out of Nixon's private funds.

Donald Segretti

Then Dirty trickster. Pleaded guilty to illegally distributing campaign literature. Served four and a half months of six month prison term.

Now Employed in a Los Angeles "business," says his attorney, who adds: "Segretti wants to fade into obscurity."

Hugh Sloan

Then Treasurer of CREEP's finance committee. Resigned July 1972. Important Woodward-Bernstein source.

Now Assistant to the president of Budd Engineering, Troy, Mich.

Maurice Stans

Then Chief Nixon fund-raiser. Pleaded guilty in March to violations of campaign law. Fined $5,000.

Now Sent bill for $153,593.58 (including $5,000 fine) to Nixon reelection campaign for legal fees and services rendered. Sold Watergate apartment, moving West.

Gordon Strachan

Then Haldeman's golden-haired political go-fer who told young Americans to "stay away" from politics. The lucky survivor—charges of conspiracy and obstruction of justice dismissed by Sirica in March.

Now Studying in his Salt Lake City home for the Utah bar exams. Says he's water-skiing and backpacking and "having a good time."

Frank Sturgis

Then Watergate burglar. Served 15 months of reduced sentence.

Now Told his story as a CIA man to the New York *Daily News.* Works in a Miami furniture store.

Anthony Ulasewicz

Then Tony U, the Watergate bagman who in his own words "dropped the cookies" (dollar bills) for Kalmbach.

Now "Enjoying myself as best I can," at his upstate New York home. Working on his life story with *Newsday* reporter Ken Gross. Indicted in Brooklyn for tax evasion.

Gerald Warren

Then Ziegler's second in command.

Now Editor of the San Diego *Union.*

Rose Mary Woods

Then The faithful. Did she erase the 18½ minutes of tape?

Now "Clearing up Nixon's private papers in Washington," says a friend. Being paid $36,000. Reportedly will quit shortly and receive a government pension.

Ron Ziegler

Then Press secretary for five and a half years. San Clemente spokesman, post-resignation.

Now Living in Alexandria, Va., apparently unemployed.

ASK YOUR LOCAL DEALER

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The first four editions of *High Times* are already collector's items, selling for as much as $10, and the supply of the latest issue is going fast. There just doesn't seem to be enough *High Times* for everybody, so we're going to publish every two months starting in September. But we need your help. First, demand *High Times* from your local newsdealer or magazine outlet. Ask them again and again; it's the only way the Big Five will put *High Times* on the shelf. Second, *subscribe* so you don't miss another exciting issue.

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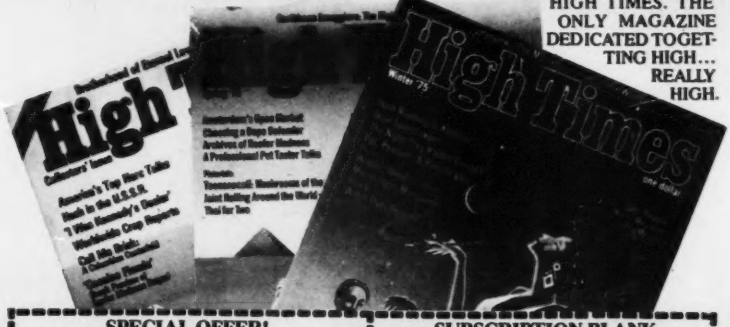

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Humor

NOTES FROM EXILE

With the first year of Richard Nixon's exile at an end, *New Times* sent reporter Paul Slansky to San Clemente to get an interview with the disgraced former President. Upon arriving, Slansky went directly to Casa Pacifica, where, almost immediately, he sighted his subject strolling along the beach.

"I introduced myself, told him whom I represented and asked if he'd be willing to talk to me," Slansky recalls. "His response was prompt and unequivocal: 'Go [expletive deleted] yourself, you goddamn son-of-a-bitch!' At this point his Secret Service agents began to take an interest in our conversation, which I now felt had gone on long enough. I wished him a pleasant anniversary of his resignation and we parted company."

Slansky reported this "ice-breaking" encounter to his editors, who quickly recognized that a new approach was called for. With the deadline for this issue closing in, delicate negotiations were begun. In exchange for 30 minutes of Mr. Nixon's time, *New Times* offered to make a contribution to the charity of his choice; surprisingly, the proposal was accepted. Slansky returned to San Clemente the next day (bearing a check made out to the Richard Nixon Legal Expense Fund) and conducted the interview which follows.

NT Let's start if we may with your . . .

RN Do we have to have that goddamned thing in front of us?

NT This? Sorry, but I never learned shorthand. I'll put it under the chair here where you won't have to look at it.

RN The Jap who invented those ought to be strung up by his balls.

NT What was your reaction when President Ford's suggested budget for you was cut by Congress for the second year in a row? He authorized $200,000 and it was cut to, I forget . . .

RN I think it was something like $121,152.08, but whatever the exact figure is, it's not important. I have never been concerned with material comforts, as I'm sure you know. The thing that troubles me here is not my own welfare

TOGRAPHIC CONTRAST
CKGROUND, THIS PAGE
ELL.

because I know I'll always get by, even if it means that Pat has to take a part-time job—but what I'm worried about is how this parsimony, if it is allowed to go uncontested, will affect the living standards of *future* ex-Presidents. It will be very difficult to reverse this niggardly trend once it develops—a fact, incidentally, that I'm sure Jerry was well aware of when he first proposed my budget.

NT Who do you blame for the collapse of Indochina?

RN Hah! Don't get me wrong, I'm not second-guessing Jerry, but you don't think I would have sat there like a candy-ass while the whole ball game went down the drain, do you? Just because Congress cut off the funds? Don't make me laugh! I notice, incidentally, that when it comes to a health bill, they have plenty of money to throw around.

NT Despite his failings, the press seems quite fond of Mr. Ford. To what do you attribute his popularity?

RN His predecessor. (No, seriously, the Mayagüez incident made a hero out of him. Shit, I was bombing Cambodia before Jerry knew how to spell it, and what did I get for it? Contempt and vilification! Don't get the wrong impression, though, I'm certainly not bitter about it.)

NT Is there anything President Ford has done that you approve of?

RN Give me a week and I might think of one. Heh, heh. I assure you I have no objection to the action he took on September 8th last.

NT Lately you've begun getting out among the public a bit. What kind of reception have you been getting?

RN Just last week I met a woman on the beach who said to me, "It's a shame the way you were hounded out of office, when Johnson and Kennedy did so many worse things and got away with them." Now, of course, you can say it's just some silly old woman and what does she know anyway, she probably never even went to college, but as far as I am concerned she is entitled to her opinion, regardless of what you or I might think of it.

NT You recently came upon a rather grisly car accident on your way home from the golf course. What went through your mind when you told your driver to stop?

RN It was second nature, really. Sure, I could have done the easy thing and pretended I didn't see it. I've pretended I didn't see things before. But I felt I had an obligation as a human being to stop, even if it meant that supper would be cold. Heroism is nothing new to me, you know. John Kennedy wasn't the only one out there in the Pacific with bombs falling all around him. Without trying to blow my own horn, I think I have what it takes.

NT It was reported that you were planning a world tour in 1976. Would this be a series of personal appearances before paying audiences, like the current Rolling Stones tour, or would it be a sightseeing trip by a private citizen?

RN I'm sorry, but I'm keeping my plans for 1976 to myself for now. Little Julie told me just the other day that she thought I would make an excellent ambassador to China, because as she put it, "You were the first one to go there." And Mrs. Nixon has remarked several times that I ought to become the Republican Party's elder statesman. Let's just say I'm leaving all my options open.

NT What about the reports that you're moving back to New York?

RN I'm glad you asked me that. Those rumors are obviously just wishful thinking on the part of these bastards in the Eastern establishment media who'd like nothing better than to have me back within kicking distance. However, if my materials remain in government custody—a situation, I might point out, that I alone of all former Presidents have had to endure—then I may very well have to sell this place and move back East where I can have access to them.

NT Sell this house? You said you were giving it to the American people.

RN You may recall I also said I would pay up the back taxes that the government legally could not collect, but did I? Watch what I do, not what I say.

NT What do you do with your spare time? Do you spend much time with friends?

RN I don't have much spare time these days, which works very well, since I don't have many friends left to spend it with. Seriously, John Mitchell came by a few months ago and we spent a pleasant evening reminiscing about the good old days, until he got drunk and kept repeating, "So I'm the big enchilada, am I?" He hasn't been back since. And Bob comes down every now and then to show his movies—last week we saw the one with John Ehrlichman and Judge Byrne. Mostly, though, I just work on my book. I did set aside some time recently to reread *Six Crises*, which I enjoyed. I recommend it.

NT Your son-in-law David said in an interview, and I quote, "One improvement . . . due to Watergate is that Mr. Nixon is no longer considered an unqualified goody-goody." How do you think history will judge your Presidency?

RN I understand that all of the books that have come out so far—and let me make it clear that I have not read any of them, though I do not question the right of their authors to publish them—they've all dealt with the, shall we say, less exalted aspects of my tenure.

NT Wallowing in Watergate, so to speak.

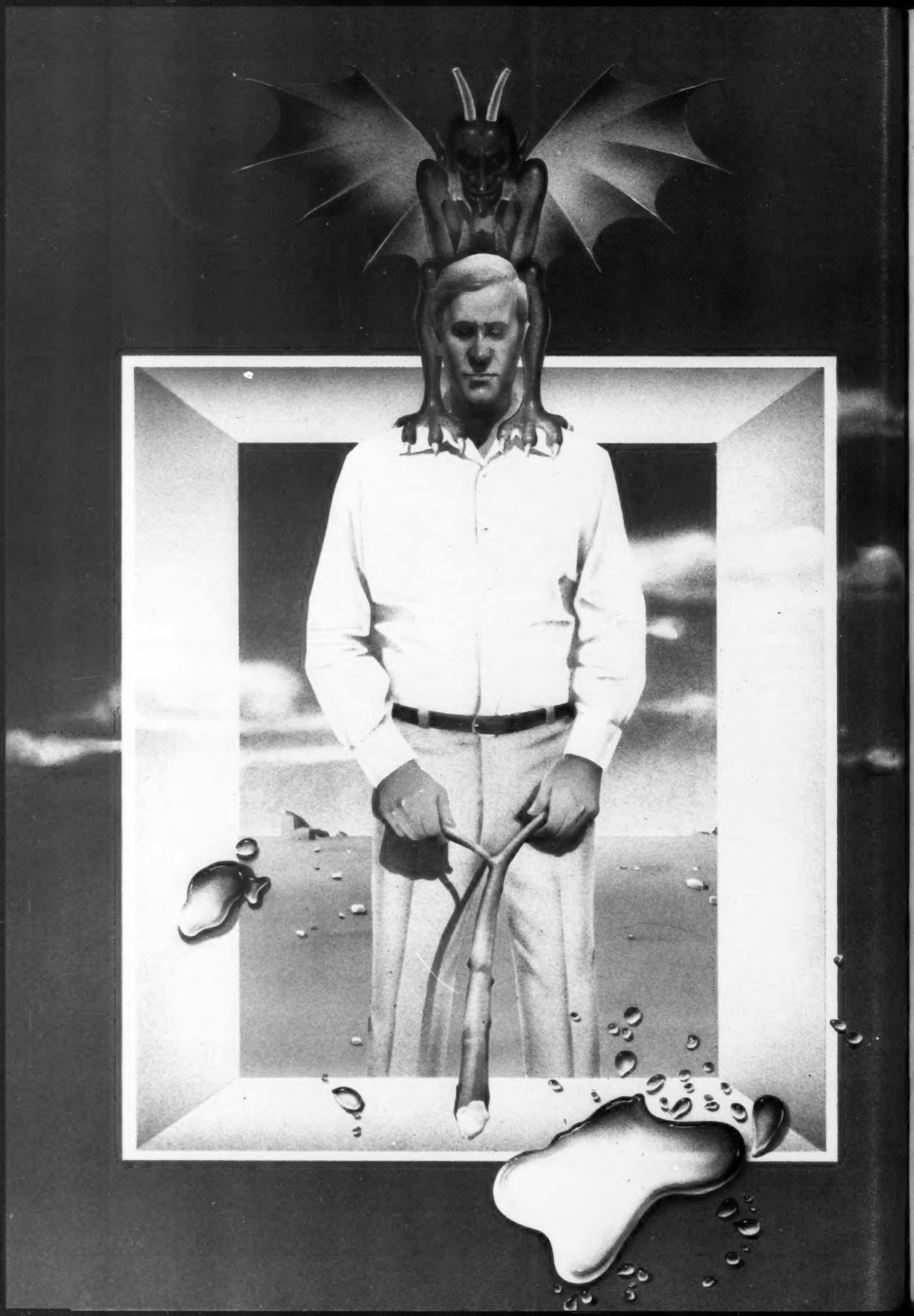
RN Exactly. Now my book, and I think quite properly, will focus on the positive phases of my Presidency. Not as juicy, perhaps, not so much grist for the scandal mill, but for my money that's where the real story is. Of course, for the public's money I'll have to throw in a little Watergate.

NT You were questioned under oath for seven hours last week by William Dobrovir. Is there any chance that this testimony will be made public?

RN There's a very good chance of it, if anyone invites that son-of-a-bitch to a cocktail party.

NT So far you have testified under oath twice, and it seems likely that you have several more appearances to look forward to. Now, President Ford's pardon does not protect you from penalties for anything you have done since leaving office. Does it ever worry you that certain of your statements under oath may be at variance with the facts as you know them?

RN Well, I'll just say, as one of our greatest Presidents—I think it was Jefferson—once observed, perjury is an awful hard rap to prove.



Water Witching

Even though dowsers now rely on helicopters and topographical maps, as well as the traditional divining rod, it still adds up to sorcery

By George Crile

In another era, the several hundred people who gathered in the tiny village of Danville, Vermont, for the annual convention of the American Society of Dowsers would surely have been roasted at the stake for practicing witchcraft. It's not that they didn't look perfectly respectable. In fact, there were a number of rather distinguished participants—college professors, scientists, physicists, even Hanna Holborn Gray, Yale's female provost. It's just that most Americans consider dowsing to be nothing more than the eccentric claim of backwoods people that underground water can be found with a forked willow stick.

The truth is that "water witching" is only the most pedestrian of a vast array of parapsychological pursuits found in the pandora's box that we innocently call dowsing; in its broadest sense, dowsing can be defined as a search for anything. And as far as I'm concerned, having observed these practices in person, dowsing is just another name for plain old-fashioned sorcery and it's about time we learned a bit more about it.

The Russians no longer bother to ask the question that preoccupies Americans about dowsing: "Does it work?" They are, rather,consumed by the attempt to discover the best method of exploiting it. They have already produced 30 highly technical papers analyzing different dowsing techniques, and they've even gone so far as to unleash a slew of dowsers to crisscross Russia to locate oil and mineral deposits and to produce a map of the country's geological resources. According to Alexander Bakirov, a Soviet scientist puzzled by the American suspicion of dowsing, Russian "water witchers" are doing their dowsing on foot, from moving cars and even from helicopters flying 200 miles per hour at 800 feet above the ground.

My own introduction to dowsing came quite by surprise when I went to visit an old friend, Christopher Bird, in his 19th-century row house in the fashionable Georgetown section of Washington. Bird, a bear of a man with a full beard and a booming voice, is an unlikely figure to find in a city whose only real interest is politics. His beginnings at Milton and Harvard were conventional enough for the son of one of Boston's oldest families. So, too, was his work as one of the first Green Berets in Vietnam in the mid-1950s, and later as a Defense Department analyst specializing in psychological warfare. But Bird's expansive temperament was ill-suited for a regimented life, and he soon burst out of his work with the military into a series of jobs, including a stint as a *Time* magazine reporter in Yugoslavia. Then, in 1968, while attending a scientific convention at the Hilton Hotel in Washington, he listened to a speech from an IBM chemist that changed his life.

The chemist, Marcel Vogel, described the experiments that he and other scientists were conducting which seemed to prove plants have the ability to interact emotionally with people. He mentioned the work of Cleve Backster, the American lie detector expert who hooked plants up to his lie detector and reported that he could communicate thoughts directly to them and register their reactions.

Intrigued by these claims, Bird began exploring the subject of extrasensory perception; to his surprise he found that hundreds, perhaps thousands of scientists were conducting serious experiments in this field. Soon afterward *Harper's* magazine printed an article Bird had co-authored with Peter Tompkins on "The Secret Life of Plants." Within days, 30 publishers from 12 countries had suggested expanding the article into a book. Once published, of course, *The Secret Life of Plants* became a best seller. Bird's plunge into the world of the occult had become eminently respectable.

"Wait till you see this, it'll blast your mind," he rumbled as he thrust his latest manuscript at me. He spread his legs apart and,like an insistent tutor, leaned over my shoulder as I read about bioenergetics, radionics, out-of-body experiences, as well as more traditional topics such as mental telepathy. The accounts were interesting, much as science fiction is interesting, but I felt in need of some visual proof.

Bird had just the answer. Recently, while attending the first

Congress on Parapsychology and Psychotronics in Prague, Czechoslovakia, he had met Bakirov, the Russian dowsing expert, and arranged for an unprecedented exchange of information between the United States and Russia on the subject of dowsing. To a dowser, the agreement was akin to the U.S. establishing relations with Red China, and Bird was on his way to the annual dowsers' convention to give a report on his mission. "Why don't you come along," he suggested. "You can have a look for yourself at what all those weirdos are capable of doing."

Danville, Vermont, is a sleepy village about 40 miles south of the Canadian border. On the first day of the convention, we had just settled down to an early breakfast in the wood-paneled billiard room of Danville's Masonic Lodge when a white-haired gentleman stood up from the table and drew a forked wooden stick out of his suit pocket. We all looked up as he held the stick in front of him and began to revolve slowly around in a circle.

The man, Gordon MacLean, is a legendary figure in the dowsing world. At 84 he still directs the analytic laboratory for Pine State Products in Portland, Maine; he is well known as the developer of a feed that nearly halved the number of weeks required to fatten a chicken for the slaughter.

"What're you doing, Gordon?" Bird shouted across the billiard room tables. "Dowsing the weather," he replied. Another quarter turn and MacLean's rod dipped down. "Sixteen miles away there's a break in the weather. It's not going to rain today," he declared confidently. And despite the overcast skies, it did not rain.

After breakfast, MacLean offered to give me my first dowsing lesson. The basics of the art are quickly mastered: First you carefully identify what you are seeking. Then you simply hold the two forks of the Y-shaped rod with your palms up and walk until the rod jumps. The main challenge is to learn, in the dowser's jargon, how to "turn your brain and your five senses off and let your mind go to work." Translated into laymen's terms, this means that you trust in some form of almighty intervention to move the divining rod at the appropriate time.

There are water veins most everywhere in Vermont, so it was not implausible that the three or four slight pulls I felt in the rods could have been a response to the water I sought. And then, quite inexplicably, the rod whipped up and whacked me on my nose.

"That's interesting," MacLean said. "Usually only Englishmen have the rods go up." MacLean then traced over my steps. When he reached the spot where my rod had jumped up, his rod dipped down in the American fashion. "Yep, there's a vein of water under here," he said.

Robert Trowbridge, a dowser from Indiana, was also giving lessons, and he offered to let me try out his special fiberglass rod. Earlier in the century, dowsers felt that the key feature of dowsing was the rod itself. Rigid theories determined the shape and kind of wood for the rod. But in recent years, dowsers have come to scorn these theories as superstitious. Some have started to use pendulums and L-shaped metal rods instead of the traditional wooden Y-shaped rods; a few dowsers claim they can get by using their hands alone. Nonetheless, Trowbridge's fiberglass poles didn't work at all for me. "You're not sensitive enough yet," he said. He had me grip one of the forks of the rod while he took my hand and held the other fork. "You can try to keep it from dipping," he said, smiling, as we approached the location of the underground water vein. The pole started to bend as if a fish were pulling on the line. I looked at Trowbridge's hands to see if he were somehow twisting the rod down, but his palms, like mine, were level. It was the pole that was bending.

"English dowsers have traditionally avoided publicity. After all, the Witchcraft Act in England was repealed only a few years ago"

In 1966, the same year that the first important conference on dowsing was taking place in the Soviet Union, the U.S. Geological Survey issued a report declaring the dowsing phenomenon officially invalid. It offered the following conclusion: "A truly astonishing number of books and pamphlets have been written on the subject of water witching, but as far as scientists are concerned, the subject is wholly discredited. Controlled experiments by a variety of researchers have shown that water witching is not a reliable method of locating ground water."

Perhaps not. But then what of the work of professional dowsers such as Jack Livingston? For the last quarter century, Livingston, a hard-rock dowser from California, has been earning his living by finding water where no one else can. The cost of drilling in hard rock is so high and the faith in dowsers so uncertain that people generally approach Livingston only as a last resort. To date, he reports his success rate for 500 wells drilled in hard rock at 99 percent. "I never miss on water," he said. "In this business you can't afford to. You can be right 99 percent of the time and nobody will remember you, but miss once and no one forgets."

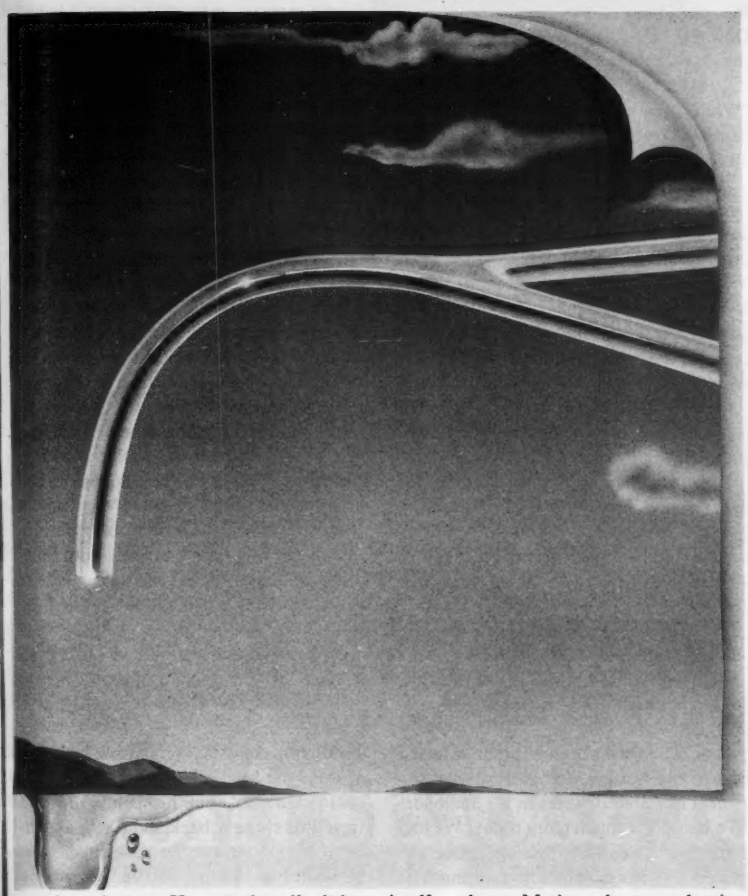
In the same year that the U.S. Geological Survey closed its files on dowsing, the U.S. Marines were discovering that dowsing had become an invaluable aid for their combat troops in Vietnam. In fact, some military observers have claimed that Marine dowsing in Vietnam saved thousands of American lives. This intriguing chapter in the history of dowsing began in 1966 when Louis Matacia, a professional land surveyor and dowser attached as a consultant to the Marines at Quantico, Virginia, responded to former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's appeal for new ideas and suggestions to cope with military problems in Vietnam.

As Matacia watched a film picturing Marines helplessly looking over an expanse of jungle terrain for openings in enemy underground tunnels, an obvious solution dawned on him. Like hundreds of plumbers in country regions of New England, Matacia had always been able to find underground utilities such as conduits, wires and pipes by following the impulses he received while holding rods cut from coat hangers. If he could locate water and underground utilities with a dowsing rod, why wouldn't the same technique work for underground tunnels?

Matacia persuaded his boss at the Triangle Research Center, a think tank under contract from the Marines, to set up a dowsing test at the Marine base in Quantico, Virginia. The test was conducted at a mock-up of a typical Southeast Asian village complete with a vast network of underground tunnels, secret rooms, weapons caches and hiding places for the enemy.

While Matacia moved about the village with his wire "rudders," Marine observers and a cameraman trailed after him. Within a half hour, Matacia had astounded his examiners by identifying virtually the entire underground network of

Based in Washington, D.C., George Crile is a Harper's *magazine contributing editor.*



tunnels and caves. He even described the slope of the tunnels and their depth beneath the ground. Furthermore, Matacia insisted that the dowsing technique could be learned by almost any Marine in ten minutes.

To prove the point, he had the Marine officers at the demonstration try the technique themselves. First a major by the name of Townsend and finally the commanding officer, General Masters, agreed to try it out. To their amazement, both felt the pull on the rudders when they walked over spots later found to be underground tunnels.

Matacia's future demonstrations proved to be equally successful, and reports of his dowsing techniques were passed up the chain of command for further consideration. But the physicists in the universities and the Department of Defense were unable to provide any explanation as to how the rods worked, so they refused to grant their stamp of approval. The Marines officially rejected Matacia's dowsing technique.

In the meantime, however, news of Matacia's wondrous rudders had spread along the grapevine to Vietnam itself, where Marines began adapting dowsing techniques to locate networks of underground Viet Cong tunnels. The practice soon became so widespread and successful that the New York *Times'* prestigious military expert, Hanson Baldwin, recorded its uses in a story entitled "Dowsers Detect Enemy's Tunnels." Baldwin, who had successfully tried dowsing himself, reported that the Marine engineers returning from Vietnam swore by the rudders, even though they didn't understand how the technique worked.

There were two schools of thought on the topic of dowsing at the Danville convention. One held that there is a rational scientific explanation for dowsing; the other, that there is not. A woman who had lost patience with this former group finally blurted out: "Why try and explain all of these things? Just accept them."

But one does rather hunger for an explanation of unexplained phenomena, and for a while I thought Chris Bird might have the answer: "I think we're going to find out before too long that dowsing is no more mysterious than radio was 70 years ago. What the hell, no one could see or feel a radio wave then and if you had told them you could transmit sounds over something called a radio wave they'd have thought you were crazy. But, by God, within ten years they were sending music through the air."

Leaving heaven and hell out of it, Bird's analogy had a certain logic, especially when viewed through the work of one of the lecturers at the convention. Dr. Zaboj V. Harvalik is a physicist and scientific adviser to the U.S. Army's Advanced Material Concepts Agency. He is convinced that dowsers can pick up magnetic field gradients to locate underground pipes, water, tunnels and so on. According to his experiments, the major sensor of a dowser is located in the area of the solar plexus. "Surround a dowser's midsection with lead and he won't be able to dowse," he concludes. Harvalik's explanation, then, suggests that we are all potential radios with antennae in our stomachs.

But Harvalik's explanation only underscores the dilemma inherent in investigating any parapsychological phenomenon. It's rather like trying to walk over quicksand: Before you know it, you're in over your head. The problem with the antenna theory is that it provides a potential explanation for only field dowsing—dowsing with an instrument on the ground directly over what's being sought. It explains nothing about map dowsing, the technique of locating things from far-removed distances with the sole aid of a map and a dowsing rod.

This inexplicable dowsing technique has become surprisingly widespread ever since the late 1940s, when the Bermuda map dowsing accomplishments of Henry Gross were carefully documented in three books by the American Pulitzer Prize-winning historical novelist, Kenneth Roberts. Since the 16th century, Bermuda was thought to be wholly devoid of fresh underground water. Yet in the late 1940s Henry Gross pinpointed several locations for drilling that later yielded abundant supplies of fresh water. He did it by dowsing. But not in Bermuda. He found the water with the aid of a map of Bermuda spread out over his kitchen table in Maine.

When Gross' work became known, traditional field dowsers like Jack Livingston discovered that they too could map-dowse. "I have no idea how it works," Livingston says. "I just do it." Dr. Harvalik acknowledges the accomplishments of map-dowsers, but he ventures no explanation for this inexplicable phenomenon.

After my dowsing lesson I talked with Major General Jedyll Scott Elliot,

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the president of the British Society of Dowsers, who was the guest of honor at the convention. "Make no mistake about it," the retired colonial officer told me. "What all of us are doing here at this convention is witchcraft; in another age we all could have been burned for it."

Elliot's own dowsing specialty is finding archaeological ruins by map-dowsing: He had located and excavated three major ruins in the previous year. Nevertheless, he was reluctant to discuss his successes. He explained that "English dowsers have traditionally avoided publicity about their accomplishments. After all, the Witchcraft Act in England was repealed only a few years ago."

Elliot then expressed concern about the claims some American dowsers at the convention were making. Included in the ranks were "clairvoyant" dowsers, dowsers who specialized in finding compatible marital partners and even a dowser who insisted he could cure children's bed-wetting problems.

Elliot's last words were straight out of Kipling—a father's advice to his son on how to be a man—but in this case they explained how to become a responsible dowser.

"The time has come when we must change our image," the general told the several hundred dowsers in his audience. "We can do so much more today. We can find water from any distance, minerals, oil and all sorts of things and we must let this be known.

"But I'm afraid, my friends, that the stick-wavers and the pendulum-swingers must not be allowed to take on jobs. We are going to have to become ruthless over the business of bad dowsing. We can't afford to make mistakes, for 'official-dom' is so quick to discredit us."

The general warmed as he finished his reproach and ended on an optimistic note. "I can sense that there is a growing receptivity to dowsing, particularly from the under-30 generation. I think we have turned the corner now. Already we have dowsers sitting on community water boards in England." The biggest challenge we may face one day soon, he concluded, will be finding enough qualified dowsers to meet the demand once the phenomenon is finally accepted.

As General Elliot's parting words died out in the Danville school gymnasium, I reached into my pocket and found that my wallet was gone. It wasn't in the car or my hotel room. It was lost, and the prospects of finding it seemed hopeless: During the day I had been in six or seven buildings and had walked throughout most of the villages. To complicate matters, most of the buildings had been locked up for the rest of the weekend and I had to leave the next day.

Early the next morning I found myself appealing for help to Gordon MacLean, the dowsers' 84-year-old elder statesman. "You need a clairvoyant dowser on this," MacLean said as he took me over to consult Ed Snedeker.

The clairvoyant dowser was delighted to help: "I see a cream-colored car associated with the wallet," he said. "But there's nothing you can do about it. Just relax and you'll get it back in a couple of hours." I didn't pay much attention to his flip prediction and pressed on in search of more specific assistance.

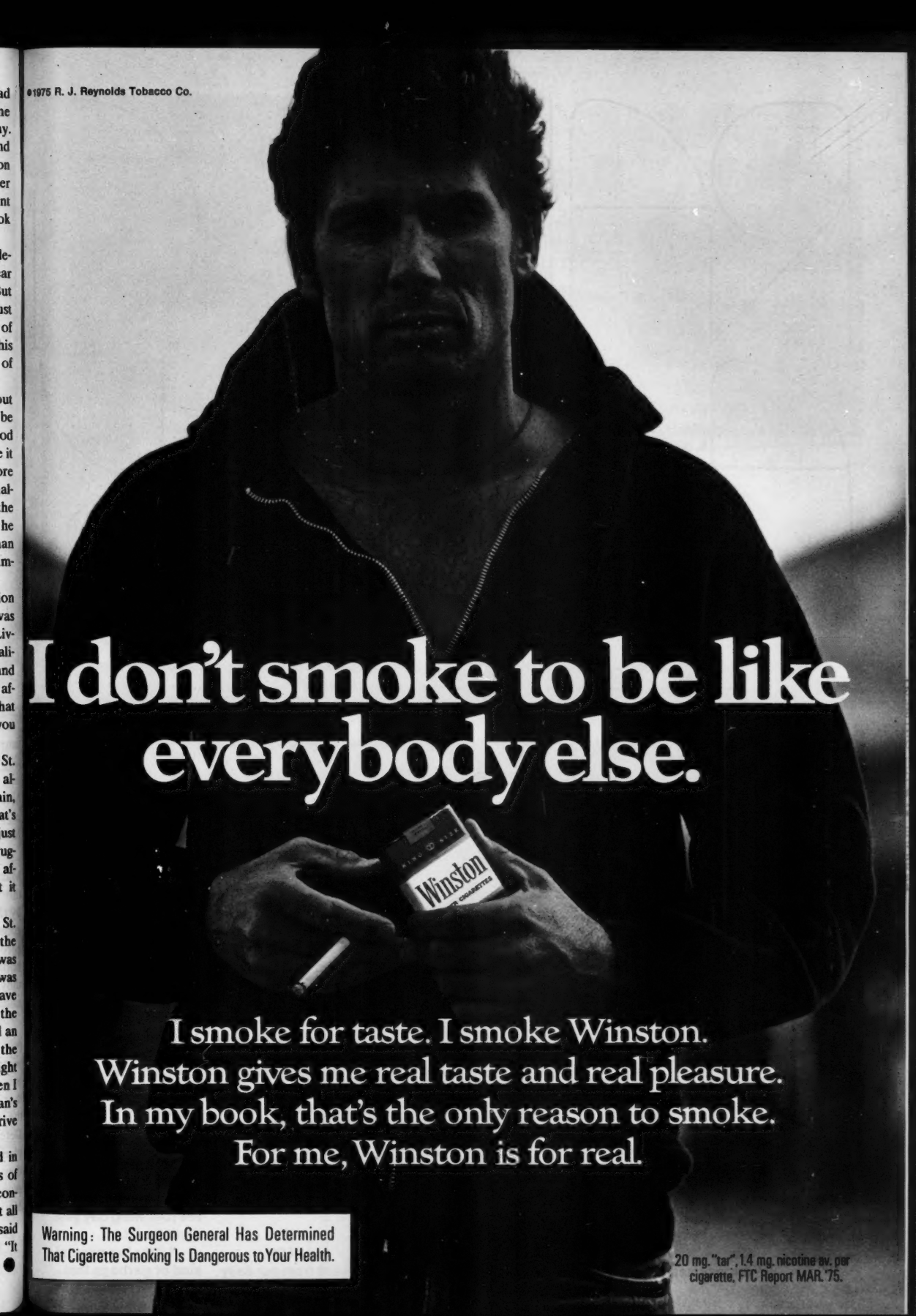
Finally an aging dowser held out his rod and asked if the wallet would be found that day. "Yes," he said, as the rod dipped down. Then he asked what time it would be found. "Before 6? Yes. Before 5?" . . . and he went on asking until finally he reached 12:50. "You'll get the wallet back at ten minutes of one," he said. This was no more helpful than Snedeker's prediction about a cream-colored car.

It was then 12:30. The convention was over, and my ride to New York was about to leave, when I ran into Jack Livingston, the hard-rock dowser from California. He took out his pendulum and started to swing it back and forth, and after a minute or two he announced that the wallet wasn't in Danville. "Were you anywhere else?" he asked.

"Yes, I was at a drugstore in St. Johnsbury Saturday morning." He allowed his pendulum to swing freely again, then put it back in his pocket: "That's where it is, either in the drugstore or just outside." I rushed off to call the drugstore. A young woman answered, and after a brief search she reported that it wasn't there.

As the car passed through St. Johnsbury, I decided to have a look in the drugstore for myself. But the store was closed, and had been all day. There was then, I realized, no way I could have talked to anyone about the wallet on the telephone. The yellow pages provided an answer: In my haste I had called the wrong drugstore. The owner of the right store, Mr. Desroucher, was home when I called. Yes, he had found a brown man's wallet the day before and would drive over to return it.

When Mr. Desroucher arrived in his cream-colored car at ten minutes of one to return my wallet, I didn't even consider telling him what a coincidence it all was. "More than happy to help," he said as he handed the wallet over to me. "It just saves me having to mail it to you." ●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RAISING A STINK

In any other city, 5,000 tons of uncollected garbage would constitute a national emergency. In New York, it has become business as usual

Text by Paul Slansky

Photographs by Peter Angelo Simon

Henri Bendel is a Manhattan emporium that caters to New York City's more exclusive clientele. So when its window display features fashions for "taking out the trash," replete with actual garbage cans (see following page), it is safe to assume that something is in the air. "We like to keep our window topical," says Bendel's president, Geraldine Stutz, "and what could be more topical than garbage?"

What indeed? Long believed to be some aberration of poor neighborhoods, and, as such, nothing to get alarmed about, garbage is suddenly busting out all over New York City. Even those who have been following the story in the newspapers have been unable to make any sense of it. So for them, and others, *New Times* offers this not-so-helpful guide to the garbage crisis.

Q. What is garbage and where does it come from?

A. Garbage is composed of the leftovers from our daily lives. It is generally accumulated in one's home or place of business until it warrants "collection." At this point it is placed on the street in a bag, or in a metal container called a "trash can." Under ideal circumstances, when you look for it on the following day you don't find it.

Litter is a special kind of garbage that

grows wild in the streets. Far from rare, it can often be identified by the distinguishing marking "Dispose Of Properly."

Q. What are the causes of the current garbage problem?

A. Avarice and cowardice. Greed on the part of the municipal labor unions and their incredible pension plans—the New York *Times* recently reported that, through the skillful manipulation of overtime loopholes, a $13,000-a-year bus driver retired at age 50 with an annual pension of $15,600! And the city, at the first murmur of the dread word "strike," invariably caved in and granted the unions' ludicrous demands, all the while sliding deeper into debt.

Finally, the well

dried up. Mayor Beame was forced to balance the books he had so deftly juggled during his years as controller. The city was on the verge of bankruptcy. On June 30 thousands of city workers were laid off, including 2,934 sanitationmen.

Q. What about the men who weren't fired? Did they work extra hard, to make sure they didn't lose their jobs, too?

A. No, actually what happened was they went on strike. Not officially, though. It's against the law in New York for public employees to go on strike, and in 1968 Sanitation Union President John DeLury spent 15 days in jail for calling one. So this time he simply announced that he'd "lost control" of his men, and all 7,000 of them spontaneously decided not to show up for work.

In two days 58,000 tons of garbage were adorning the city's streets. A deal was worked out that temporarily rehired all laid-off sanitationmen until the budget situation was finalized—and even then some balked at going back to work unless they were guaranteed that the return was permanent. Nonetheless, go back to work they did—on July 4, at a time-and-a-half holiday pay rate that cost the city over $700,000.

Meanwhile, Mayor Beame was in Albany getting permission to levy an additional $150 million in taxes on city residents, who, with state and city income taxes plus an 8 percent sales tax already weighing on them, were the logical source for the needed funds. On July 7, 750 sanitationmen were permanently rehired, at a cost to the taxpayers of $17 million.

Q. What did the taxpayers get out of this new expenditure in the way of extra services?

A. Strange as it may seem, not only did they not get any extra services but the ones they had been receiving were drastically reduced. July 18 was yet another of the city's endless days of financial reckoning, and 1,434 sanitationmen, out of a work force of 10,000, were laid off.

As a result, regular garbage pickups have been cut by 40-50 percent, lending the city a distinctive visual and olfactory aura in the midst of an unusually severe heat wave. Bulk collection has been reduced by 60 percent, and street-cleaning—the actual washing of the streets—is little more than a memory. "Streets are not being cleaned just because they need it," says Sanitation Department public relations man Vince Whitfield. "They are being cleaned only when it can no longer be avoided." In areas with extreme accumulations, residents have found that dumping the garbage into the streets

the Perfect calculator

Space-age science has produced America's first portable display calculator with an optional tape.

The new Casio Mini-Printer turns into a printing calculator at the flick of a switch, recording every entry you make on a plain paper tape. It's a great new calculator idea.

Nobody's perfect! To be sure you're getting the correct answers from any calculator, you should run a tape. For only with a paper tape can you be absolutely sure.

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A CASE FOR THE HORIZONTAL PAPER TAPE

As exciting as the Mini-Printer appeared to us, we couldn't get used to horizontal tape. But when we finally did, we actually liked it better. Here's why:

If you normally discard your tape after checking it, the horizontal tape has distinct advantages. It's easier to check because you read it as you naturally read—from left to right. It's easier to discard because it's smaller.

If you must attach your tape on a document, the horizontal tape is by far the neatest method because the tape, after mounting, looks like part of the document.

In short, once you discover the distinct advantages and the many new applications of the horizontal tape, you'll have no problem accepting its new format.

A CASE FOR THE LOW PRICE

The most inexpensive combination display/printing calculator with all the features of the Mini-Printer costs over $300 in today's calculator market. And it isn't portable. When you add the Casio's portability, the rechargeable batteries, the AC battery charger and the ease of operation the Mini-Printer stands out as an incredible value. And therein lies the problem. The price of the Mini-Printer is so low that people tend to question the quality or look for the gimmick. There is no gimmick. The Mini-Printer is a "breakthrough product"—a unit whose advanced technology has totally revolutionized the printing calculator market.

THE STORY ABOUT THE UNIQUE PRINTING HEAD

A calculator's printing head is the electromechanical device that prints the paper tape. On a standard 8-digit printing calculator with vertical tape, a printing head has eight rows of ten digits or a total of 80 separate digits. When calculations are performed, all eight rows must respond.

By using a single horizontal printing disc, the Mini-Printer requires only ten digits in one row. There is less power required, less wear, easier inking, and little or no maintenance.

This new printing head is so revolutionary that over 20 patents were applied for after its development. The system is so simple and has so few moving parts that it can be inexpensively manufactured with the most expensive materials.

Place a strip of ¾" Scotch® Brand Magic tape over the paper tape and attach it horizontally to your document. Your papers are kept much neater.

The Mini-Printer uses standard paper—readily available 5/16" ticker tape. The tape costs only 30 cents a spool and gives over 10,000 impressions. (In a standard printer, that's equivalent to 1,250 rows of eight digits each row.) The ink cartridge will last over 100,000 impressions or almost a year and costs only $2.50 to replace. In short, the Mini-Printer will save you money when you buy it and money every time you use it—all with the world's most advanced technology.

There's no messy ribbon to worry about. The Casio uses an ink cartridge which is replaced by slipping off the old one and slipping on the new one.

Part of its great design is its simplicity and minimal service requirements. It should last years without any service whatsoever, but should service be required, simply slip your 25 ounce Mini-Printer into its handy mailer and off it goes to one of several prompt national service centers. The Mini-Printer has already been proven by months of testing and actual consumer usage and is backed by a solid one year warranty.

OH YES, THE FUNCTIONS

Almost lost in the unit's excitement is what you actually get in functions. The Mini-Printer has square root, a fully addressable memory, a "Paper Advance" key and a "Result Only" key that prints only the results of each calculation.

Your eight digit L.E.D. display has a full floating decimal, overflow indicator and even a floating negative sign to signal negative balances. The unit performs the functions algebraically—exactly as you think. Power is provided by rechargeable batteries that will last years without replacement, and the AC charger actually signals when a full charge is reached.

The Mini-Printer measures only 1¾" x 4¼" x 7½" so you can now have the convenience of your own printing calculator without the desk clutter. In its display or printer mode, the calculator is totally silent. Only when a key is depressed does it generate any sound. This is one of the newer options now offered in only the very expensive printers.

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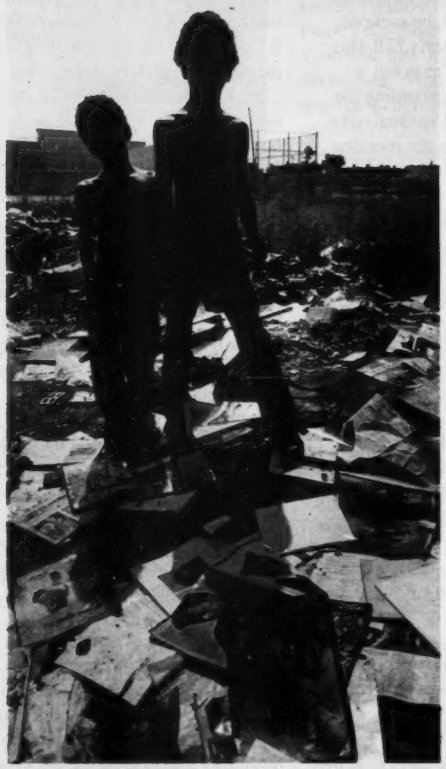
gets swift results—when traffic cannot pass, street-cleaning surely qualifies as "unavoidable."

Q. Wait a minute. If only 14 percent of the work force was laid off, why have services declined by 50 percent?

Q. A good question, and one for which new answers are being offered almost daily. First it seemed that some of the men who lost their jobs were being rather poor sports about the whole thing, and several sanitation

trucks were sabotaged. Then it was the summer vacation schedule. Then there was the high rate of retirement by men who feared an imminent cut in pay and, therefore, in pension. Then it turned out that men were being switched to "strange neighborhoods" and didn't know their way around yet. And, of course, all of this resulted in a "decline in morale" that manifested itself chiefly in a sizable increase in the number of sick calls.

Q. What can the average citizen do?



A. Sanitation Commissioner Robert Groh has been working with community groups to organize neighborhood clean-up committees, and he is asking people to store their garbage inside their homes until collection day comes around—which, in some neighborhoods, it now does only twice a week. Some building superintendents have resorted to bringing the garbage back into the basements and spraying it with disinfectant—a temporary solution, to be sure.

Q. What is the outlook for the future?

A. A good question, and one for which new answers are being offered almost daily. On July 29 there was a backlog of 3,500 tons of garbage that was expected to require three more days to remove. On August 2 the backlog was still 3,500 tons, but now the prediction was another week before it would be gone. At any rate, the streets will be dirty for some time to come. Sanitationmen are under instructions to go for tonnage—the city wants figures to report, a virtual garbage body count. "I'd like to do a quality job," lamented one worker as he left a layer of loose litter in the street and moved on to the next group of boxes and bags, "but they want quantity."

Q. What is the answer?

A. A good question.

side trips

Down home on the range

Liberty Hill, Texas—It's the 199th birthday of the United States and Willie Nelson is fixin' to have himself a little ol' Fourth of July picnic. And, he reckons, what better place than Liberty Hill, this sleepy village in the lush Texas hill country? A fragile breeze is rustling the brushy mesquite trees and Spanish oaks; black-eyed susans dance in the morning sunlight. Even the scraggliest of thorns are alive with purple blossoms.

Brighter still are the costumes of Willie's guests, now meandering down a dusty road to the picnic site: cowboy hats and calico, halter tops and bikinis, madras bermuda shorts and, across one conspicuously braless bosom, a snug little T-shirt confiding: "I love cowboys." Frisbees zing overhead. Firecrackers crack. With ice chests full of hot dogs and peculiarly Texan brands of beer, lawn chairs in hand and suntan lotion flowing like the Pedernales, these folks are damn sure, no-doubt-about-it going to a *picnic.*

All 95,000 of them.

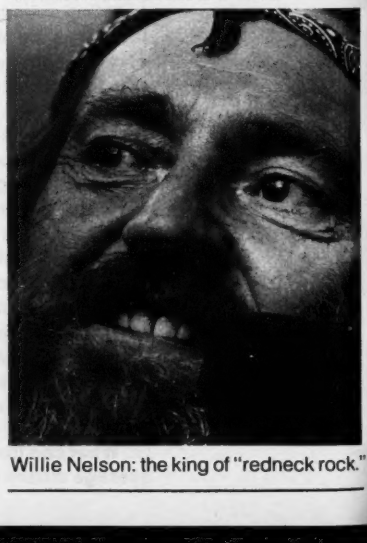
Now it obviously ain't your average run-of-the-mill picnic. Nor is Willie Nelson, country singer, just another central Texas goat roper. At 42, his still youthful voice evokes years of experience, connoting both freshness and a good-humored sense of the past. Even the face of his guitar has an extra hole in it from years of hard picking. The startling effect, along with the efforts of other pickers and singers, has been to popularize among young Texans the same sort of shit-kicker soul music they once prided themselves on leaving back on the farm with their parents. They call it "redneck rock," and Willie holds that a picnic is the perfect place to listen to it.

Accordingly, he invited a few special friends. Among them are Kris Kristofferson, Rita Coolidge, Billy Swan, John Sebastian, the Pointer Sisters, the Charlie Daniels Band and Doug Sahm, perhaps better known nationally as the Douglas of the Sir Douglas Quintet. Despite this star-studded program, Willie maintains his plans are simple. "We'll have a little candlelight service and drink a little hot tea," he said with a wink a few days before the picnic. "Everything will be sort of holy. Then we'll all pair off. . . ."

No doubt inspired by similar visions, other picnickers are swarming in from all over the Southwest, many from locations as distant as Colorado. One 25-year-old woman came all the way from San Francisco. "This is something I've never done before," she says. "I'm doing Woodstock six years late."

Sort of. For one thing, the crowding is similar. Eleven miles away an interstate highway is backed up for miles, and people are forced to park up to eight miles from the site. After parking, many hitchhike and flop on the backs of passing cars and trucks. But mostly they just walk. And sweat. Bumper stickers, predominantly on mud-splattered pickups, combine to form the elements of an almost coherent philosophy—blatant chauvinism: "I'm proud to be from Texas"; hard drinking: "Long Live Longnecks" (a reference to the renewed popularity hereabouts of old-fashioned *Gunsmoke*-style beer bottles); sex: "Make Love in a Pickup"; sport: "I Love Rodeo"; and finally, a distressingly cosmic unity: "God Bless John Wayne."

It's clearly a day to get back to the country, a constant theme in progressive country music, as "redneck rock" is sometimes called. For the $7.50



PHOTOS BY RON MOSKOWN

Willie Nelson: the king of "redneck rock."

admission price (advance tickets were $5.50), folks are promised two lakes, wooded hillsides and the willow-lined San Gabriel River, in addition to such bucolic down-home tunes as "I'm-down-to-seeds-and-stems-again Blues."

But their first impression as they enter the gate is decidedly more urban looking. Scores of "rent-a-johns" are arrayed in multitudinous rows, where hundreds of people shift from foot to foot waiting in line. In the distance, across shimmering heat waves, they glimpse an enormous Woodstock-style stage. In front of it are masses of people, many beneath brightly colored tents and awnings. Flags are abundant—mostly American and the revered Lone Star of Texas, but also a respectable number of Confederate "Stars and Bars."

Today is officially "Willie Nelson Day," according to a unanimous declaration by the Texas State Senate. Willie—wearing beard, shoulder-length hair and a gold earring—earlier accepted the accolade in faded blue jeans. It's the kind of incongruity folks have come to expect: His sorrowful baritone belongs to the roadside honky-tonks where he still likes to play for honest-to-god rednecks, yet younger enthusiasts happily pass him joints during performances.

Picnicking on the Fourth of July—Texas style.

"I remember when there wasn't anything but uppers and whiskey," says Willie of a life that began in Abbott, Texas, a small cotton farming town a few miles north of Liberty Hill. He picked cotton, worked as an assistant telephone operator, a disc jockey and even sold Bibles, before striking it rich in Nashville as the prolific writer of more than 600 published songs. A few years back, he moved home to Texas to play his music and host Fourth of July picnics. The first, in Dripping Springs, was planned for about 10,000, but 50,000 showed up. Last year the event, held on a race track and three days long, attracted over 100,000 people. "I started with a lot of friends," says Willie. "It shows you what a lot of friends can do if they get together with the same idea."

Willie begins the picnic, as he does every show, with a good timin' tune called "Whiskey River." Appropriately, half-gallon jugs of fine Tennessee sour mash are everywhere visible. In addition, six-packs of Lone Star Beer are being marketed at an outrageous $3.25 apiece to wash down fried chicken, barbecue, watermelon and fresh hill country peaches, which are also on sale. Fragrant marijuana smoke hangs over the site like a Los Angeles haze.

On stage, between musical sets, the emcee dutifully reads announcements that have been passed up to him:

"Crazy Cathy says if it feels good, meet her at the fried chicken stand."

"Moondog, meet C.W. at the T-shirt stand."

"Tim Van Peeble's yogi wanted at front-center stage."

"Mike says we need big tits down front."

And finally, "If you aren't straight enough to write the messages," the announcer begs, "please get a friend to write them for you." Unlike Woodstock, there are no warnings about strange green-colored drugs.

Along about 6:00, the previously friendly sky boils up in a thunderhead. A cool wind billows, and the rain comes. Flags are hastily rolled as people run for cover to watch the brief storm pass. In its wake, a faint rainbow arches gently across the western sky. The sun-parched dust in front of the stage is now gooey, claylike mud.

With darkness, the music starts up again. Doug Sahm is singing a song about Nuevo Laredo, the border town where generations of Texas boys have romantically sought their first bordello experience. Drunks are falling all over one another in the mud, while crowds form around a few particularly vigorous coed mud fights. One after another, performers, most decidedly country backed by a big rock beat, sweep across the huge stage. David Allen Coe—who with a straight face calls himself "the mysterious rhinestone cowboy"—wears a tight black suit with snow-white fringe a foot long; Roy Rogers might blush to be seen in it. Charlie Daniels, a huge man, belts out his hit song, "Leave This Long-Haired Country Boy Alone." But the biggest applause is reserved for the most atypical act. When the stunningly attractive Pointer Sisters sashay across the stage to a seductive jazz beat and scream out in unison: "These brown babes gonna boogie for you!" the crowd explodes. They're on their feet for the set's duration. Regrettably, Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge appear way too late—almost 3:00 a.m.—when many picnickers have already left.

Most of the music evokes the frontier, conjuring attitudes that no longer exist. The title cut of Willie Nelson's new album, for instance, is about a red-headed stranger who was more than justified in shooting a yellow-haired lady trying to steal his horse. Other redneck rock tunes scampishly poke fun at traditionally sacred country motifs: "Please Don't Say Fuck You When You Leave," or "Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed." And perhaps the most popular progressive country song, sung vaguely to the tune of Merle Haggard's anti-hippie manifesto "Okie from Muskogee," is a rouser called "Up Against the Wall, Redneck Mother."

With the thumping basses, the twanging pedal steel guitars and the screaming fiddles, comes cold. People huddle around small fires for warmth, resembling Revolutionary War soldiers as July 4th becomes July 5th. Now, the afternoon's sunburn is painfully apparent. A few surly drunks try to pick fights, and folks remember how far away they're parked.

In the early morning stillness—amplified music still resounding through the moist air—the picnic disintegrates. Bodies curl up in sleeping bags along the river. Vans and pickups edge down the blacktop, inching away from Liberty Hill. And it's right easy to understand the emotions Willie expresses in a tune he wrote. "Sometimes it's heaven, Sometimes it's hell," he sings. "And sometimes I can't even tell."

—Douglas Martin

PHOTOS BY RON MCKEOWN

Movies

Solstice

By Frank Rich

We're now knee-deep in the ides of summer—that horrible period in August when there isn't a new movie in sight and it's so damn hot that you wouldn't want to walk to a theater even if there were one. This is the time of year when film critics nationwide tend to pontificate on the state of movies in general (movies are better than ever, movies are worse than ever—you pick) or, if they are more fortunate, go on vacation. My vacation doesn't begin, I'm afraid, until next week, and so I have had to spend the past few days trying to figure out how best I might pontificate on the current dilemma of the American film. Only I'm not sure what that dilemma is; the truth is that there isn't all that much to say. If you've seen *Nashville,* you've seen the one out-and-out great American movie this year; if you've seen *Shampoo, Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *Jaws,* you've seen the other good movies since January; if you've seen *Night Moves,* you've seen the most fascinating failure. If you've seen either *Mandingo* or *Rollerball*—or, heaven forfend, both—you've been to the heart of the heart of darkness, and my heart goes out to you. All the rest is (as Oscar Hammerstein II once put it) talk.

But, as I clean out my pockets and empty out my desk (or is it vice versa?), I keep coming across these tiny slips of paper on which I have written cryptic notes to myself. These notes represent germs of ideas for movie columns (or some of them do—others are illegible, having been to the cleaners and back), and collectively they sum up the ramblings of what I am rapidly coming to believe is a most disordered mind. August can turn your brain to mush.

John Cheever, a writer I admire beyond reason, once collected some of his short stories under the title *Some People, Places and Things That Will Not Appear in My Next Novel.* With profuse apologies to Mr. Cheever, I hereby submit the following random notes, transcribed from the backs of ticket stubs and grocery lists and all having to do with some people, places and things that will not appear in any future movie columns I might write. They are listed in no particular order.

Musicals. My friend Gail and another friend of mine, Marty, recently suggested to me that someone should do a column about the extraordinary aesthetic overlap between 1975's number one theatrical smash, *A Chorus Line,* and the year's biggest movie, *Nashville.* That someone will not be me, but Gail and Marty do have a point.

A Chorus Line, director-choreographer Michael Bennett's musical about 17 dancers who audition for chorus jobs in a nameless Broadway show, is, like *Nashville,* a work that uses a showbiz metaphor to say something broader about what one might loosely call the human condition. Bennett devised his show, as Altman did his film, out of improvisations with a large and talented cast, and *A Chorus Line*'s "plot" is a lot of little stories that interweave with one another as the various characters lay bare their souls through song (as well as dance). *A Chorus Line* is a terrific show, but, in the end, its Broadway roots do not allow as wide a range of non-showbiz associations as *Nashville*'s country-western milieu does. I don't say this pejoratively—indeed I prefer Broadway music to C&W; it's just a reflection of the fact that Broadway is always Broadway, while country music takes in a greater geographical and metaphorical landscape. In *Nashville* Altman can work in the same fertile territory mined by Mark Twain; in *A Chorus Line* Bennett works over the more provincial (albeit irresistible) tradition of such previous, great, showbiz-fixated musicals as *Gypsy* and *Follies.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN PHILLIPS

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ANN PHILLIPS

Since *A Chorus Line* is the biggest hit Broadway has seen in years (it's now playing at the Shubert Theatre in New York City), it inevitably will be snapped up for the movies. I would like to go on record as saying that this is one show that belongs entirely to the theater (it's set on an empty stage) and that any attempts to cinematize it are doomed to disaster. But why bother? I'm sure Jon Peters is already buying it for Streisand.

Sex. Has something been missing from your moviegoing life lately? It may be that there hasn't been a truly steamy erotic sequence in a movie for months (unless you're into sharks). There has, however, been one truly erotic performer who has surfaced—though not in a sex scene—in movies this summer. Her name is Melanie Griffith, and she's had significant supporting roles in *Night Moves* and *The Drowning Pool* as well as a small part as one of the beauty pageant contestants in *Smile.* Good-looking actors and actresses come and go in the movies, but Griffith is something else; she simply knocks you out with her sexuality. I haven't seen anyone like her on the screen since Tuesday Weld (Griffith is 17), and there's no question in my mind that she's going to have as long a movie career as she wants. Projecting sexual dynamism on screen is a real talent, like acting (which Griffith can do, too), and you had better believe that this woman has it. (Actually, I don't see how you can fail to notice.)

Liberal Guilt. One of the more disturbing factors to creep up in movie criticism since the 1960s is the tendency of some critics to endorse or condemn a film largely because they want to endorse or condemn a political point of view (real or imagined) that the movie stands for. Certainly the politics of a film count for something (when they're there), but there are many instances when a film's quality or lack of it exists independently from its particular ideological slant. For instance, it is possible that an antiwar movie can also be a bad movie (e.g., *Hearts and Minds*), and it's possible that a film which preaches frontier justice and peddles Stone Age conceptions of womanhood (e.g., *Straw Dogs*) can be good. To think otherwise—to judge a movie strictly according to whether you agree with the filmmaker's message — is comparable to believing that all comedies are by definition great and all westerns are a waste of time, or some other such arbitrary critical scheme. This doesn't mean that one has to like movies that are philosophically abhorrent, but it can mean that there is something to admire in them. If you're interested in film, your time is better spent watching *Birth of a Nation,* with its pro-KKK tilt, than *Sounder.*

This point has been bugging me a great deal lately—especially since I've seen a new film called *Cooley High. Cooley High* is a movie about black teenagers growing up in the Chicago of 1957 and has been described, by some critics, white and black, as a black *American Graffiti.* The film is, at best, a black Archie comic book—and, aside from superficial matters of '50s ambience, it has nothing in common with that fabulous George Lukas film about a land-locked northern California town and the young people who define their lives by driving around it in circles. *Cooley High* is sloppy in its evocation of period, and, worse, it has no cinematic or dramatic strategy for making us feel the pulse of a real community, no big laughs, no clearly delineated characters and no credibly human juices. It looks and sounds like a TV movie—but has less vitality than the TV sitcom *Good Times,* with which it shares its setting and screenwriter. The only excuse that a critic might have for praising *Cooley High* is to endorse the film as a theoretically healthy alternative to the normal run of black exploitation movies. That's no excuse. Maybe *Cooley High* deserves some brownie points for giving us no pimps and junkies, but it's still junk. Moviegoers who go to see it with great expectations are bound to feel ripped off.

Parlor Games. If you haven't read E.L. Doctorow's new novel about early 20th-century America, *Ragtime,* I hope you will. It's a good book and fun to read, too, but more than that, it's a dandy excuse to play that most reliable of rainy-day amusements—casting a novel for the movies. *Ragtime* has dozens of characters, fictional and non-fictional, who drift in and out of one another's lives; it was made to be a Robert Altman movie and, lo and behold, it is Altman (via Dino De Laurentiis) who holds the rights. But Altman has a project or two ahead of *Ragtime,* so there's ample opportunity in the meantime to cast the film yourself. To start you going, here is one daydreamer's partial cast list: Lily Tomlin (Mother), Keith Carradine (Younger Brother), Robert Duqui (Coalhouse Walker Jr.), Henry Gibson (Henry Ford), Burgess Meredith (J.P. Morgan), Alan Arkin (Tateh), Gwen Welles (Evelyn Nesbit), Keenan Wynn (Harry K. Thaw). . . .

Real life. Lately a number of friends of mine have been trying hard to sell me on real life. They say that real life is a lot of fun, and that it includes such activities as walking in the sunlight, talking on the phone and drinking beer. Given the paucity of new movies right now, I intend to check this out—at least until the back-to-school pictures arrive for Labor Day. Real life may have its points, but even under the best of circumstances I doubt that it will ever beat the movies.

See you in the dark.

With this column, Frank Rich leaves New Times *to become film critic of the New York* Post. *Nik Cohn,* New Times' *new film critic, makes his first appearance in these pages in the issue of September 19.*

Music

Tonight's a fright: Neil Young's miserable album about feeling miserable

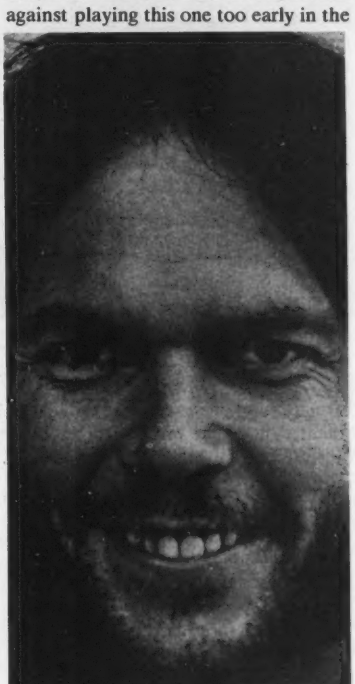
By Janet Maslin

Tonight's the Night is Neil Young's third washout album in a row—his fourth, if you care to count the *Journey Through the Past* soundtrack he doesn't seem to have had much to do with—and time is running out. Young earned the right to coast several years ago, at least as far as his record company was concerned: *Harvest* (and its smash single, "Heart of Gold") was so successful that half the Warner Brothers branch offices across America kept life-size Neil Young cardboard cutouts standing in their lobbies forever. (When a record label thinks enough of an artist to make a wooden Indian out

of him, they're ready to do substantial pampering.) As for his fans' loyalty through times of moodiness and trial, Young probably earned that even earlier, when *Harvest* was just a twinkle in his impish eye. But in releasing an effort like this new one, Young—who is clearly oblivious to such considerations anyway—may be putting the backlog of patience and understanding he's built up over the years to the final test.

Conceived as one long dirge in memory of Bruce Berry, a member of his road crew, and Danny Whitten, a musician with Young's original backing band, Crazy Horse (both of whom apparently died of drug overdoses), *Tonight's the Night* features a ghoulish cover photo of Young that could frighten small children, especially his own. The Reprise label, normally orange, is printed in black. An accompanying fold-out sheet contains some clippings about a recent Young tour from what seems to be a Dutch newspaper, a photo of Roy Orbison, credits from Young's preceding *On The Beach* LP, plus miscellaneous scribblings ("Tonight's the night. We're gonna get loose in the caboose with our backs to the tracks. Yes, we're all on vacation . . .," reads a note to someone named Waterface). The music itself is even stranger: Young's voice is hoarse and jagged as he explores new dimensions in tunelessness, producing more flat notes here than most people turn out in a lifetime. His musicianship, once so meticulous, has gone slack, too, leaving both him and Crazy Horse sounding scraggly. Finally, in the realm of thematic coherence, consider this wail from "Borrowed Tune" (the melody is that of "Lady Jane"): "I'm singing this borrowed tune/I took from the Rolling Stones/Alone in this empty room/Too wasted to write my own. . . ." Young recently told Cameron Crowe of *Rolling Stone* that *Tonight's the Night* was "the most liquid album I've ever made. . . . You almost need a life preserver to get through that one," which accounts for the meandering of most of his material, as well as the extraordinarily listless, plaintive vocals.

But Young also told Crowe this: "[an audience] should hear what the artist sounds like under all circumstances, if they want to get a complete portrait. . . . You're just pretending if you don't let your music get just as liquid as you are when you're really high." Although such sentiments turn *Tonight's the Night* into an exasperating illustration of The Imitative Fallacy in Action, they also underscore Young's sincerity, for whatever it's worth. At least this is not an insult in the manner of, say, Lou Reed's recent *Metal Machine Music,* which was a double LP filled with nothing but industrial noise. No, Young seems to have been quite in earnest when he set out to make a miserable album about feeling miserable. And he has succeeded, beyond his wildest nightmares: this is enough to force even his most ardent admirers into the camp of Lynryd Skynryd, whose low regard for him ("Well I hope Neil Young will remember/Southern Man don't need him around, anyhow," went their "Sweet Home Alabama") was evident to anyone who turned on an AM radio last summer. Those who have always been devoted to Young may find reasons to respect *Tonight's the Night,* perhaps even to buy it. But Young himself, in his interview with Crowe, advises against playing this one too early in the morning, because there's certainly no way the thing can be enjoyed.



Neil Young: gloom and caterwauling.

And yet it deserves to be suffered through—just like *Time Fades Away* (the screechy live album that prefigured this change of style) and *On The Beach* (which had troops of Mansonoids in dune buggies grimly patrolling the Hollywood hills) before it. For although Young has never been all that articulate, he has an impressive gift for letting his raw feelings come through; this may be an ugly album, but its emotional purity makes it as arresting as it is painful. Like Young's *Journey Through the Past* film, it's easy to laugh at and easy to dismiss but still possessed of some kernel of honesty. Much of the movie was nonsense, but some of its early footage probed deeply enough into Young's own fearfulness and defensive cynicism to make the whole project worthwhile. Similarly, his evocation of heartfelt despair this time is too effective to be easily ignored.

And its murkiness is not *Tonight's the Night*'s real problem, anyway; instead, Young's characteristic evasiveness is what does him in. The soddenness into which he retreats for much of the album, the lapses into drunken irresponsibility, recall the latter half of his film, which betrayed the beginning by suddenly turning away from autobiographical insight into mysto-cryptic baloney (e.g., the figure in cap and gown who began to wander portentously through the proceedings, eventually removing a syringe from a Bible and shooting up by the sea). Though this album was originally conceived as both a memorial tribute and an expression of grief, and though nodding out may indeed be Young's way of coping with this or any other crisis, the prevailing fogginess does the original intentions a disservice; if Young was at all serious about this project, he needed either to make an album about the way his own fears were aroused by the double tragedy, or to take a long, sober look into the abyss. *Tonight's the Night* falls short because he shies away from both of these extremes without finding any middle ground and never really explores either one. Next to that weakness, the deterrent effects of his gloom and caterwauling are almost beside the point.

There *is* some hope for Young's future, for anyone to whom that still matters. *Tonight's the Night* was cut two years ago, and, according to the artist, he has cheered up since then. His long relationship with actress Carrie Snodgress is over, he has moved from his mountain ranch back to the L.A. mainstream, and the change in circumstances seems to have left him feeling relatively lively, at least enough to suggest that his next effort will be more positive. How it could be anything else is difficult to imagine.

****The Basement Tapes,** *Bob Dylan and the Band* (Columbia). Excerpts from these legendary 1967 Woodstock sessions have been bootlegged in the

past, but some cuts here are completely new; others had been pirated, but in different versions. In any case, this really is the stuff of which legends are made: bright, energetic, still astonishingly fresh, it's a landmark and a must.

***½* Sons of the Beaches,** *Flash Cadillac and the Continental Kids* (Private Stock). Why listen to a bunch of Sha Na Na types mimic the early '60s surf sound? Why not—they do it impeccably, though their tendency to get snide (as in "Hot Summer Girls") is annoying. Can't compare with the real thing (e.g., any Beach Boys reissue), but then nothing can.

***Love Will Keep Us Together,** *The Captain and Tennille* (A&M). Hot off the success of their current hit single, this promising new duo badly needs an album to match. But their first LP sounds nothing like its title cut; elsewhere Toni Tennille's vocals are syrupy and negligible, sadly lacking in spunk. Their version of Brian Wilson and Tony Asher's "God Only Knows" is a particularly maudlin abomination.

Books

Bringing the news
By Geoffrey Wolff

Pieces of the Frame *by John McPhee.* Farrar, Straus & Giroux (308 pp., $10).

Writing recently about John McPhee, Edward Hoagland committed a generalization: "Journalists . . . tend to ripen with age, get actually better, unlike so many sad novelists, who fall flat on their noses in middle age." Now Hoagland is himself both a novelist and a journalist—an essayist, rather, like McPhee—and he ought to know what he's talking about. But here he doesn't; he's off by a mile. Depending upon the character of their talent, some novelists improve with age, and some do not. Some have stamina, and some do not. Some are intimidated by money and fame—if they come—and some are goaded by it to better work. Some are cast down when money and fame do not come, and some are provoked to a creative rage by their disappointment. What is certain is that the preeminent novelists of this generation—Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Thomas Pynchon, John Updike, Anthony Burgess, E.L. Doctorow, Peter Matthiessen, John Barth—have ripened as they aged. And what has become of the six-day wonders of journalism? Breslin reserves his best work for fiction, Hunter Thompson has damned near played out his vein and Tom Wolfe, in middle age, has just fallen flat on his nose.

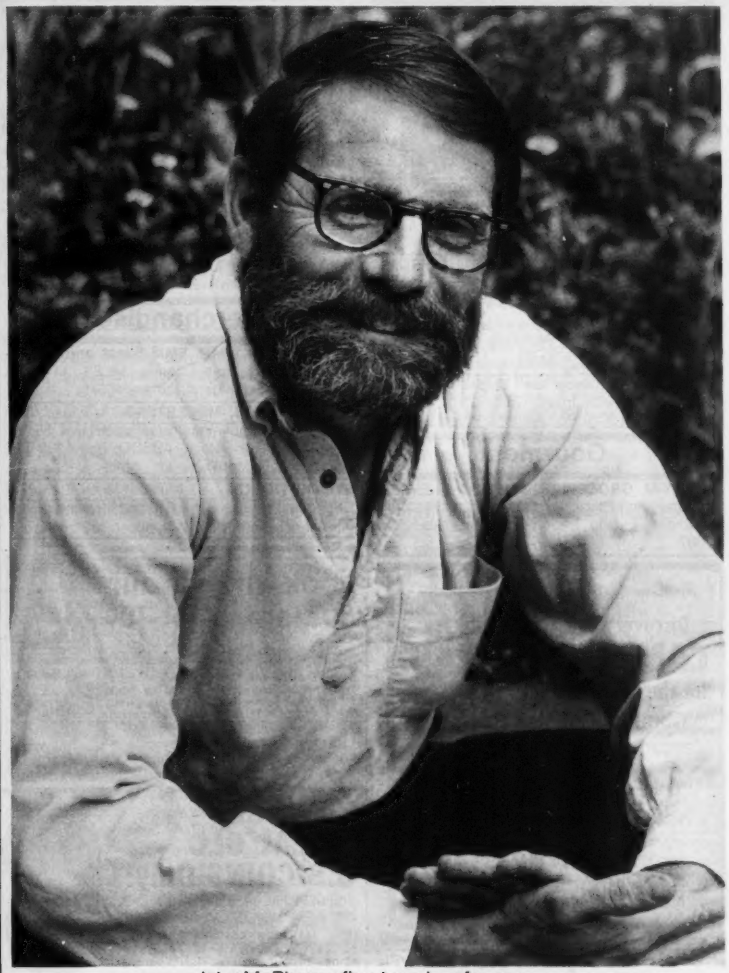
Journalists, when they reach middle age, begin to yearn for a column. Their legs give out. They weary of the brutal humiliations they were obliged to endure as they hustled for interviews and information while they were kids. Rising, they put up with the inconveniences of their profession. Fully risen, they will not. The author of *The Making of the President: 1960* becomes the author of *The Making of the President: 1968.* It isn't only that the journalist's belly grows, or that he gives up his muscle. He loses his capacity for surprise, too. Facts tend to replicate themselves, as fictions—by definition *novelties*—do not. Lies, fictions, keep a man on his toes. The truth, far from setting him free, quite wears him down.

Hoagland mistook his own case for the generality of journalistic cases, because he has grown stronger as he has grown older. He writes about nature: the nature of animals, the nature of man, the nature of society. He has recognized in John McPhee a boon companion, a writer indeed, and one growing with such deliberate, vegetable speed that he has begun to assume the alarming quality of a natural force in himself. Once upon a time nothing could have been simpler than to describe John McPhee's boundaries. If the rubric *New Yorker* Writer was meant for anyone, it was meant for him. His long articles for that magazine were always worth reading; they brought information no one had before thought to solicit. They were craftsmanlike. They did not insist on the presence of their author, nor most often even acknowledge his presence. They were above both gossip and malice. They were admirable. And something about them suggested that their author would never transcend their manifold virtues. That McPhee, settling for a great deal, had settled for too little.

Something has happened to McPhee and to his work, something so rare among journalists as to be almost singular. The easier it has become for him to turn away assignments and to loaf a little, the harder the assignments he has set himself and the harder he has worked at them. If there is any piece in this collection that was not won by brutal labor, it is "Basketball and Beefeaters," written 14 years ago. The best thing here, and the best thing McPhee has ever written, is an essay called "Ruidoso," published in *The New Yorker* in 1974.

It's about quarter horses and the richest race in the world, the All-American Futurity, held every year in Ruidoso, New Mexico, where the winning horse brings home a third of a million dollars. The piece, 43 book pages, is a remarkable performance in which ten horses and their owners are brought from a field of more than 200 to the starting line, where they are set in motion by a man whose character and manner McPhee has set, just as he has drawn the characters and manners of those ten horses and their owners. The author's control is awesome, and so too is his store of facts. McPhee does not so much smuggle in facts (he used to, as good reporters will) as subdue them. "Ruidoso" has an odd effect on a reader: It is as though he learned the exotic customs and paraphernalia of quarter horse racing just instants before McPhee shared it with him.

His sense of the telling detail has always been good, but here it is so graceful—and again, so hard won—that the piece cannot be said to be salted with details and anecdotes, as most good essays are, as McPhee's own "Firewood" is. All is seamless. The horses each have their wrinkles: This one is nervous, and his brother likes to sleep before a race, to rest on his way to the starting post. The horse McPhee's eye is on, Calcutta Deck, likes listening to the radio. "He liked hard rock and country-and-Western. He liked the six-o'-clock news." This isn't cute stuff. McPhee is never coy: He finds nothing in nature astounding but many things worth his attention. He is particularly fascinated by compulsions and fixations, by fanatics, and this has become, after 11 books in 11 years, his signature. He likes to bring the news about people who cannot cease whatever it is that they're doing, people who cannot imagine why everyone else is not doing it also, who do what they do because no one else does it.



John McPhee: a fine-tuned performer.

McPhee is drawn, that is, to pioneers, not to addicts; he doesn't concern himself with people who repeat themselves because they cannot help themselves. "Centre Court" is about tennis players who have confined their obsessions to the dimensions of a court: He has written a great deal about tennis and about basketball, games that require compulsive repetition and that can be won only by a flash of something that transcends repetition. McPhee himself has tuned his performance as a writer the way a great tennis player might tune his own performance, till without knowing precisely why or how he begins to hit winner after winner. At such high moments of the game, tennis players will tell you their opponent disappears and they begin to play against nothing less than the game's limits, against the limits imposed by gravity, resistance and their own physiology.

McPhee can be faulted—could in the past be faulted—for his eagerness to recognize such moments wherever he chose to look. So concentrated was his own performance that he made of the Ashe-Graebner match in *Levels of the Game* more of a tennis match than it was. He doesn't do this anymore. Perhaps he is more at ease with his own power, less dependent than he once was on the importance of his subject to win his piece for him. Calcutta Deck comes home eighth in a field of ten at Ruidoso, and his owner, Bill H. Smith from Pea Ridge, Arkansas—who had come west to knock off the high Texas and California rollers—goes home a loser. And no preachments, please, about some losers winning. McPhee is tougher than he used to be. The kind of apostrophe he wrote to Frank Boyden in *The Headmaster,* or to Bill Bradley in *A Sense of Where You Are,* is no longer his preoccupation. Indeed, in a recent essay in *The New Yorker* about a couple of his chums who play a bit of pinball, he wrote a self-parody, right on the money, of his old habits of fanship. ("The Search for Marvin Gardens," which is collected here, has a bit of such self-parody in it.)

He has never written better. He takes chances he didn't used to hazard. In the lead essay, "Travels Through Georgia," which from time to time I consider to be even better than "Ruidoso," he writes of a turtle, a dead snapping turtle, being carried by a girl "like a suitcase with a broken strap." (Hoagland, his only peer at this kind of thing, once wrote of a treed mountain lion springing down on a dog, "as heavy as a chunk of iron wrapped in a flag.") Here is McPhee suddenly confronted with a red-tailed hawk perched on a pipe in the basement of a cottage in Atlanta: ". . . At sight of him I was not sure whether to run or to kneel. At any rate, I could not have taken one step nearer. He was two feet tall. His look was incendiary. Slowly, angrily, he lifted and spread his wings, reached out a yard and a half. His talons could have hooked tuna. His name was Big Man. His spread-winged posture revealed all there was to know about him: his beauty—the snowy chest, the rufous tail; his power; his affliction. One of his wings was broken."

McPhee's essays about natural phenomena, their persistence and man's menace to them, have an elegiac quality, of course. But it is stiffened by his own stubbornness and resourcefulness. McPhee writes a great deal about Scotland, and it may be that the secret of his waxing powers is lodged back there, with his ancestors, shrewd and thrifty and sturdy people. More likely the secret is no secret at all, but is rather the natural and rare consequence of a talented man's curiosity. McPhee has never been self-assertive, but there's no boyishness left in him now, and he doesn't tug his forelock. He knows his powers, and is comfortable with them, and—bet your life—he'll tend them. Curiosity, learning the news and bringing it, is the entire provocation for his art. And the nature of his curiosity—mature, increasingly deep and increasingly broad—is bringing his work to levels that have no measurable limit. Now he has begun to share with the best novelists the power to enforce his curiosity on his readers. Once one would have said, *Here's McPhee on quarter horses; I'd like to know about quarter horses; I'll read it.* Now one merely says, *Here's McPhee.*

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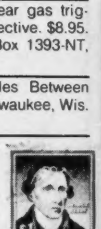

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Who has whole orchestras anymore?

Final Tribute

By Mark Goodman

Dear Manny,

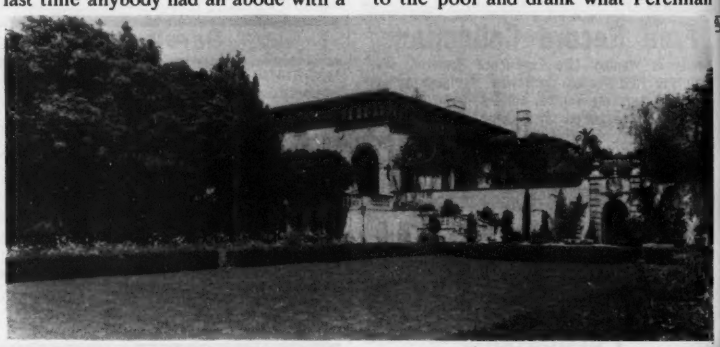
So how are things back in Fun City? Is the garbage up and the payroll down? Ha-ha. Well, yours is not to complain. At least your family put you in a nice place on Central Park West, so you can go see some of the old crowd what shows up sometimes at the Algonquin. Me? My son, the Medallion King, the genius director of *The Prairie Pulaskis,* puts me out in the Valley in a place I call the San Fernando Burgundy Double-Knit Concentration Camp. But I got no gripe. He got a good price for my place in the Canyon from a spangled boy who dresses up like a girl, but is straight? It's a very new world, Manny.

At least I didn't go the way of our dear departed friend, Hal Lloyd. He would leap with spectacles on from his grave, Harold would, if he could see what has happened to his fabulous estate Greenacres. Remember Greenacres, Manny? Well, you better remember it, because it's the last one left of the houses from the old Hollywood. And for my money, the classiest of them. Doug and Mary's joint, Pickfair, used to get a lot of ink, but to my way of thinking (drinking?) it didn't hold a Roman candle to Greenacres. Like Bill Holden said in that movie where Gloria played like, you know, herself? He said, "It was the kind of a place that crazy movie people built in the crazy '20s."

As you will recall, our friend Harold the Comedian qualified for the '20s but not the crazy. In fact, he was probably the only one of us who wasn't forever deranged with ego and/or drink. But he let it all, like the kids say nowadays, hang out with that house. Fourty-four (count 'em, 44) rooms of Dago Renaissance teetering on top of 15 acres of your basic mountain greenery. The Bespectacled Bungler, as the fans were disposed to call him, began building that palace in the middle of the '20s, when a dollar was worth almost 100 cents, and didn't finish it until 1929, when the dollar was very rapidly approaching zilch.

So in those fabulous '30s, when things weren't exactly fabulous, people needed to live out their fantasies, and where better to live them out than at Hal Lloyd's estate? Those parties were splayed out in every one of those mags with headlines like, Hedy says: LATINS ARE LOUSY LOVERS! But what parties! Pickford and Fairbanks and Chaplin and the Thalbergs and Adela Rogers St. John and Virginia Fox and Darryl Zanuck when that fun couple was still together, they would roll up the palm-lined Benedict Canyon Drive in their Rollses and Lancias and Packards like there was no tomorrow. And I wanna tell you, for a lot of them there wasn't.

Because, as we should well remember, whatever was your pleasure, it was at Hal Lloyd's place. When was the last time anybody had an abode with a



100-foot-high waterfall, or a canoeing course, or a thatched-roof Irish playhouse, or a 40-rank theater organ? You walked into a red terrazzo-tiled foyer with 16-foot-high damask curtains. You could sun away the afternoon at the Olympic-sized swimming pool, or play tennis on the outdoor court, or play golf on the nine-hole course, or play handball on the indoor court complete with grandstand—the only private court, my friend, on which the national freakin' championship was ever held. You could stroll through the garden—which was a bona fide replica of Louie the Whatever's Tuileries and primped by 16 gardeners and irrigated by Hal's own reservoir. For the less athletically and aesthetically inclined, there was a wine cellar (which Hal never touched to his last sober breath) of maybe 18 million bottles, and 26 bathrooms to handle the effects therefrom (cocky-doody to you, too). And at nights there were buffets with a thousand maroon roast beefs and golden turkeys and amber cocktail music and starlight dances with whole orchestras. Whole orchestra, Manny! Who has whole orchestras anymore?

These days the smart-guy writer-sociologist-*cum*-bullshit artists with their 20-20 hindsight call us things like Dream Merchants, and call houses like Hal's Dream Palaces built as monuments to our monumental egos. You know what I say to that? I say, So what? I was there the night that Fitzgerald took a swipe at Irv Thalberg, and the night Flynn caught a certain Russian-born producer *en flagrante* with a famous flagrant star, and the night that Fairbanks dived from the bathhouse into the pool and drank what Perelman would have called a jeroboam of champagne while paddling in the water.

And I say that the people who went to Hal Lloyd's house had class, amigo, *class.* You want to tell me that these little tin people named Beatty and Redford and Streisand, these no-talent punko artists with their pseudo-crypto intellectualism and their white shoes and their blow-dry hair, got class? They couldn't even *buy* Hal Lloyd's place, much less build it. He wanted to leave it as a museum, like a silver shrine to, you know, a quicksilver past. Instead, it was bought at auction by an Iranian, for Chrissake, who'll probably turn it into a Linthead parking lot run by Omar Shariff. And if that's class, my friend, make mine vanilla.

Yours in Remembrance of Things Past by Marcel Proust,

Sol

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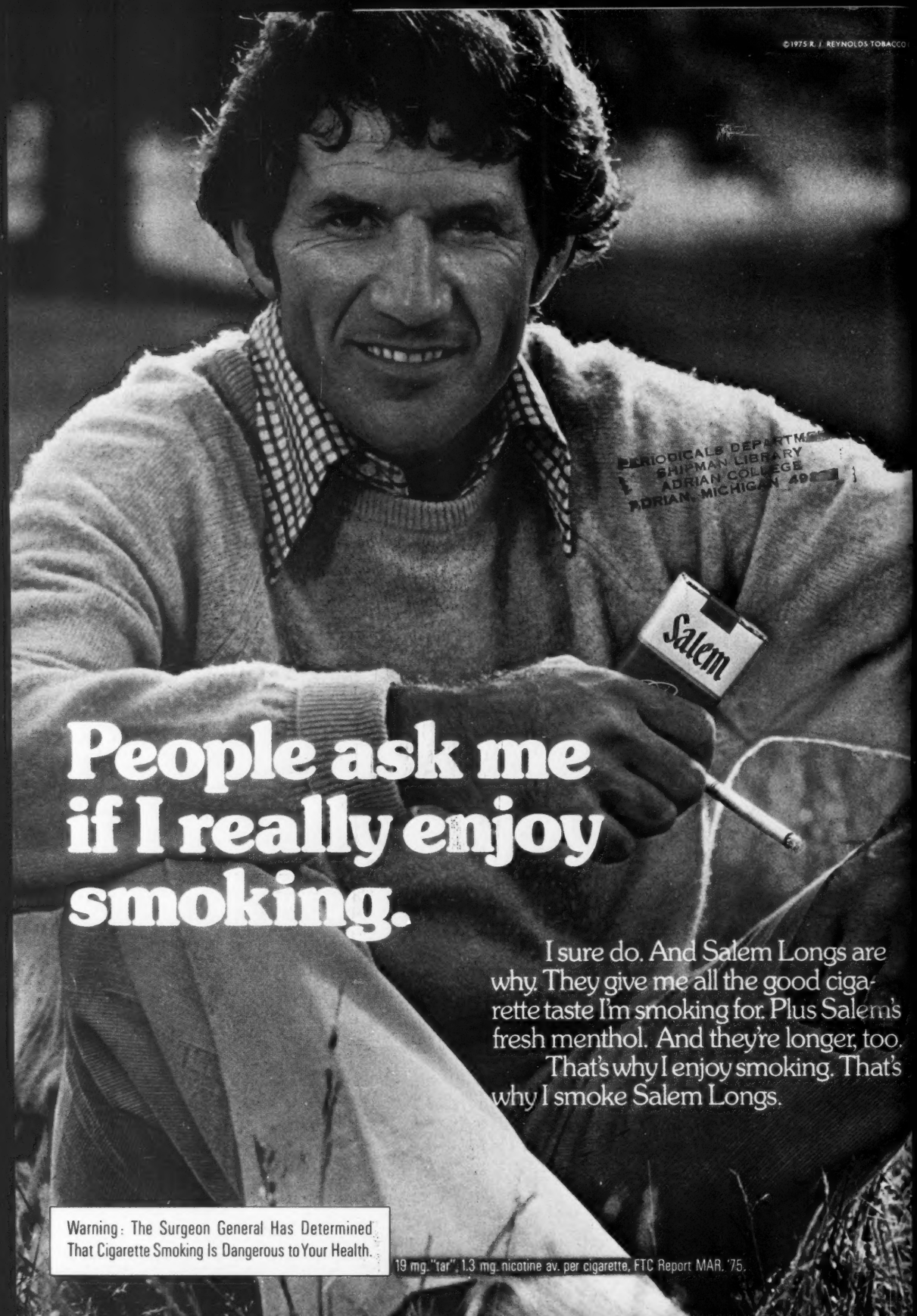
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